

A Postcolonial Feminist Critique of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: A South African Application

by
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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, more commonly known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was launched in September 2015. The SDGs are a global target-setting development agenda aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring peace and prosperity for all by 2030. The SDGs have been lauded for vastly improving on their predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), by broadening the global development agenda to include environmental, social, economic and political concerns, and for, in the process of their formulation, engaging with member states and civil society groups. The SDGs can further be commended for broadening the scope of the targets under the goal on gender equality and women's empowerment, and for recognising that gender equality has social, economic and political dimensions.

This study employs a postcolonial feminist theoretical framework to critique the SDGs and to make recommendations on how these critiques can inform South Africa's implementation of the SDGs, with the ultimate aim of achieving substantive gender equality and women's empowerment in the country. The study argues that the MDGs and South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) have failed to guarantee gender justice because they are anchored in two cognate theoretical approaches – liberal feminism and economic neoliberalism – that prioritise economic growth over addressing the structural drivers of women's subordination and oppression.

In contrast to liberal feminism, postcolonial feminism recognises that gender inequality has interconnected economic, political and social dimensions in which power inequalities and discriminatory norms are embedded. It consequently seeks fundamentally to challenge and transform dominant patriarchal, racial and economic power structures, both in the public and private domain. A postcolonial feminist critique of the SDGs highlights that corporate interests have taken precedence over feminist critiques demanding systemic transformation. It is up to the South African government to recognise and enlarge women's freedom and agency, and to initiate truly transformative local strategies that address the systemic drivers of gender injustice. Given that Government has affirmed that its unreservedly gender-blind NDP will inform South Africa's engagement with the SDGs, it is highly likely that the country's 30 million women will be left behind.

OPSOMMING

Die Verenigde Nasies het in September 2015 die 2030 Agenda vir Volhoubare Ontwikkeling, beter bekend as the Volhoubare Ontwikkelingsdoelwitte (SDG's), bekendgestel. Die SDG's is 'n doelstellende globale ontwikkelingsagenda wat daarop gemik is om teen 2030 armoede te beëindig, die planeet te beskerm en vrede en vooruitgang vir almal te verseker. Die nuwe doelwitte word aangeprys vir die feit dat hulle aansienlik verbeter op hul voorganger, die Millennium Ontwikkelingsdoelwitte (MDG's), deur die globale ontwikkelingsagenda te verbreed om omgewings-, sosiale, ekonomiese en politiese kwessies in te sluit. Die nuwe agenda is ook geloof vir die feit dat dit lidlande en die burgerlike samelewing by die proses van sy formasie betrek het. Die doelwitte kan verder aangeprys word vir die feit dat die omvang van die teikens onder die doelwit vir geslagsgelykheid en die bemagtiging van vroue verbreed is en vir die feit dat hulle erken dat geslagsgelykheid sosiale, ekonomiese en politiese dimensies het.

Hierdie studie wend 'n postkoloniale feministiese teoretiese raamwerk aan om kritiek te lewer op die SDG's en om aanbevelings te maak hoe hierdie kritiek Suid-Afrika se implementering van die doelwitte kan beïnvloed ten einde die uiteindelijke doel van substantiewe geslagsgelykheid en die bemagtiging van vroue te bereik. Die studie voer aan dat die MDG's en Suid-Afrika se Nasionale Ontwikkelingsplan (NOP) gefaal het om geslagsgeregtigheid te waarborg omdat albei ontwikkelingsagendas gegrond is op twee verwante teoretiese benaderings – naamlik liberale feminisme en ekonomiese neoliberalisme – wat ekonomiese groei prioritiseer bo die fokus op strukturele drywers van die onderdanigheid en onderdrukking van vroue.

In teenstelling met liberale feminisme, erken postkoloniale feminisme dat geslagsongelykheid gekonnekteerde ekonomiese, politiese en sosiale dimensies het waarin magsongelykhede en diskriminerende norme ingebed is. Die teorie poog gevolglik om dominante patriargale, rasgebaseerde en ekonomiese magstrukture, in beide die openbare en private domein, fundamenteel uit te daag en te transformeer. 'n Postkoloniale feministiese kritiek op die SDG's dui daarop dat korporatiewe belange voorrang geniet bo feministiese kritiek wat sistemiese transformasie vereis. Dit is die taak van die Suid-Afrikaanse regering om vroue se agentskap en vryheid te erken en te vergroot en om waarlik transformerende plaaslike strategieë te inisieer wat die sistemiese drywers van geslagsongeregtigheid aanspreek. Gegewe die feit dat die regering bevestig het dat sy onvoorwaardelike geslagsblinde NOP Suid-Afrika se betrokkenheid met die SDG's gaan bepaal, is dit hoogs waarskynlik dat die land se 30 miljoen vroue agtergelaat gaan word.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
CWGL	Centre for Women's Global Leadership
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EGM	Expert Group Meeting
GAD	Gender and Development
GBV	gender-based violence
GM	gender mainstreaming
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLP	High Level Panel
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
ISCU	International Council for Science
ISSC	International Social Science Council
KPMG	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
LGBTIQ	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Questioning
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
ROFAF	Réseau des Organisations Féminines d’Afrique Francophone
SA	South Africa
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SARChI	South African Research Chairs Initiative
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs
UN FOA	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
UN Habitat	United Nations Settlements Programme
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHRC	United Nations Refugee Agency
US	United States
WAD	Women and Development
WHO	World Health Organisation
WID	Women in Development
WITS	University of the Witwatersrand
WMG	Women’s Major Group

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction and Background to Study

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched in September 2015. The Agenda aspires to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030. One of the goals contained in the agenda is aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The combined notion of women and development (a concept which today implies a number of approaches to women's development) emerged during the 1950s and 1960s. This was the time of decolonisation, a period in which women alongside their male counterparts participated in independence movements and the building of new nations. In Western countries this period was marked by the revival of feminism and the beginning of the women's liberation movement (Reddock, 2000: 33-34). The United Nations (UN) had also declared the 1960s its First Development Decade; yet, no specific reference was made to women at this time (Kabeer, 1994: 1).

When the UN General Assembly reviewed the results of the First Development Decade in 1970, they were made aware of three factors that would ultimately form the basis of the various approaches to women's development. The first realisation was that the industrialisation efforts of the 1960s had been ineffective, and that they had in fact worsened the lives of the poor, and "Third World women"¹ in particular (Rathgeber, 1989: 20). Secondly, new literature, especially Ester Boserup's (1970) *Women's Role in Economic Development*, revealed that women played a central role in the economic life of developing societies, and that colonialism and modernisation, through the introduction of the international market economy, had disrupted the sexual division of labour in these societies (Pearson, 2005: 158). Finally, the feminist movement that re-emerged around 1968, advocated that women had to be more fully integrated into the development process (Reddock, 2000: 34). Thus, the central point of the original women and development approach was that both women and men had to be lifted out of poverty, and that

¹ The term "Third World" was originally coined at the Bandung conference in 1955 in response to the new world order that emerged after World War II. It represented a third way – nonaligned with either the Eastern or Western bloc – and also a geographical area comprising of "underdeveloped" or "over-exploited" states (i.e. Latin America, the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, South and South-east Asia, and Oceania). Women in these geopolitically defined areas continue to be referred to, and refer to themselves, as "Third World women" (interchangeable with "women of colour"). The term is problematised by postcolonial feminist scholars given their resistance to Western feminism's portrayal of Third World women as a "singular monolithic subject" and the subsequent "discursive colonisation" of them through the emphasis of their difference. Nevertheless, the term also unites women of colour in their common struggle against sexist, racist and imperialistic structures as well as Western feminist domination and colonization (Mohanty, 1991). For simplification, the term will be used in the remainder of the text to refer to women living in the Global South.

both women and men had to benefit from development efforts (Parpart, 1989: 3 & Reddock, 2000: 35).

The first international women's conference was held in Mexico in 1975, a year that was also declared by the UN as International Women's Year, and marked the beginning of the UN Decade for Women under the theme of Equality, Development and Peace (Krook and True, 2010: 112). During this decade, women's development became an area of specialisation in the development field, and was institutionalised as an internationally recognised set of concepts that raised consciousness about women's issues globally (Reddock, 2000: 36).

1.1.1. From WID to WAD to GAD

The sub-field of women and development can historically be divided into three approaches that were instituted in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1970s, women involved with development issues in the United States challenged the assumption that the benefits from development projects would automatically "trickle down" to women and other disadvantaged groups in Third World nations. They lobbied to bring this evidence to the attention of US policymakers, arguing that modernisation did not automatically increase gender equality (Connelly, Li, MacDonald & Parpart, 2000: 57). They began to use the term *women in development* (WID). This approach was heavily influenced by liberal feminism and therefore laid emphasis on equality of opportunity for women (Rathgeber, 1990: 491). WID advocated that women had to be integrated into development projects and plans, as well as have a say in policy design and implementation (Pearson, 2005: 160 & Krook and True, 2010: 115). To increase women's access to development, WID planners called for more accurate measurements of women's lived experiences, and improvements in women's access to education, training, property, and credit for more and better employment (Rathgeber, 1990: 491).

WID was particularly criticised on the basis that it borrowed from modernisation theory, therefore measuring development by the adoption of Western technologies, institutions and values (Connelly, Li, MacDonald & Parpart, 2000: 57 & Singh, 2007: 104). Women's integration into economic life and increased participation in the labour market were regarded as the main solution to gender inequality. As a result, WID disregarded the sources and nature of women's subordination and oppression, including the feminisation of poverty and employment; social reproduction; women's unpaid reproductive and care work; as well as the intersection between vertical and horizontal inequalities based on women's class, race, colonial history, and position in the global economy (Rathgeber, 1990: 491-492). WID was further critiqued for

discounting the agency of Third World women and for misrepresenting their diverse local realities (Singh, 2007: 100).

The end of the 1970s saw a new approach to women's development emerge, grounded in Marxism and Dependency Theory. *Women and development* (WAD) advocates argued that neo-liberal capitalism was the main culprit in the underdevelopment of the Third World (Kay, 2005: 1178). Proponents of WAD maintained that WID's objective to integrate women into development served primarily to sustain existing global structures of inequality and maintain Third World countries' economic dependency on industrialised, capitalist states (Rathgeber, 1990: 491; 492). WAD's analysis of development represented women as one of many exploited classes within the capitalist system (Singh, 2007: 104), and therefore also downplayed horizontal inequalities, especially those based on race and ethnicity (Connelly, Li, MacDonald and Parpart, 2000: 61).

In the 1980s *gender and development* (GAD) emerged as an alternative to WID and WAD. This approach emerged from the experience of grass-roots women's organisations and the work of postcolonial feminist scholars, and has been most clearly articulated by a transnational feminist organisation called Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). DAWN called for an approach to women's development that recognises the importance of global and gender inequalities (Parpart, 1989: 10). The GAD paradigm argues that women's status in society is heavily influenced by their material conditions and by their positions in the national, regional and global economies. The approach further focuses on the interconnection of gender, class and race and the social construction of their defining characteristics. GAD proponents argue that women experience oppression differently, according to their class, race, colonial history, culture, and position in the global economic order. Moreover, GAD recognises the differential impacts of development policies and practices on women and men, and sees women as agents, not simply recipients, of development (Connelly, Li, MacDonald & Parpart, 2000: 62-63). These points are key in the theory of postcolonial feminism, a theory that is employed throughout this study to critique current development projects in South Africa.

Despite the clear progression in women's development theory from merely aiming to incorporate women into economic life (WID), to seeking to radically transform structures of patriarchal domination in all spheres of society, the dominant theoretical approach continued to be employed by governments, relief and development agencies (including the UN and NGOs), and bilateral donor agencies, remains WID (Connelly, Li, MacDonald & Parpart, 2000: 64). This is mainly due to the fact that a fully articulated GAD perspective demands a degree of

structural change that national and international development agencies have found difficult to incorporate into continued development programmes and strategies (Rathgeber, 1990: 495). As result development programmes have however largely failed to instigate substantive gender equality and women's empowerment.

1.1.2. The Millennium Development Goals

International development originated in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Not only was there a need to reconstruct what had been demolished during the war, but more and more countries were gaining independence from their colonial masters in the second half of the 20th Century which raised awareness on the “underdevelopment” of these previously exploited nations. International organisations such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (today known as the World Bank), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the UN were established in part to aid underdeveloped countries in their modernisation and industrialisation process.

From the end of World War II until the 1980s poor countries experienced high economic growth with relatively little interference from donor states (Amsden, 2007: 3). However, in 1972 the Bretton Woods financial system collapsed which consequently resulted in the liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation of the global financial system (Germain, 2010: 56). This restructuring of the global economy led to decreased exports and high interest rates, which ultimately caused developing debtor countries to default on their foreign loans (Carrasco, 1999: 120).

As a means of countering the Global South's debt crisis, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank became more involved with development issues. The two international financial institutions required debtor countries to implement market-based reforms in exchange for financial assistance (Carrasco, 1999: 119). Liberalisation was therefore extended to developing and emerging market economies (Germain, 2010: 57). The economic reforms that were required for further loans were known as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and have been extensively criticised for increasing poverty, widening inequality, and eroding social welfare gains. The poor, women and children were hit the hardest as a result of SAPs (Carrasco, 1999: 124). Ziai (2011: 28) consequently argues that development theory and policy underwent a crisis in the 1980s. In order to alleviate this crisis, development discourse witnessed a complete transformation at the beginning of the 1990s and started introducing “new” concepts

such as sustainability, participation, good governance, poverty reduction, gender, globalisation, and market-orientation (Ziai, 2011: 28).

So, at the dawn of 21st century, the international development community, led by the UN, concluded that development had so far not reduced global poverty to expected and promised levels. At the UN Millennium Assembly in 2000, member states agreed to support a set of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which promised to halve global poverty and to promote a more equitable and tolerant world by 2015. The MDGs, consisting of eight goals, 21 targets and 60 indicators, were unveiled at the UN General Assembly in 2001 (Hulme, 2009: 42). See Figure 1.1 for a list of MDGs.

Figure 1.1: List of Millennium Development Goals



Source: UN City Copenhagen, 2015

The third MDG focuses on promoting gender equality and empowering women, yet contains only one target, namely to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Overall, the implementation of the third goal has been disappointing, both in the scope of its aims, and the achievements of its target. Its promise that education for women would bring quality of employment and political participation has also proven illusory (UN, 2015: 8). Despite neoliberal development's emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as the proclaimed revolutionary power of gender mainstreaming, gendered assumptions and practices continue to impede women's economic progress (O'Manique and Fourie, 2016: 101). Even high levels of participation in politics have not improved women's lives. The impressive number of women parliamentarians in South Africa has not stopped South Africa from having

one of the worst rape and gender based violence records in the world (StatsSA, 2011: vi). In some countries, including South Africa, over half of women victims are killed by their partners, often in the context of an ongoing abusive relationship. Furthermore, gender based violence is particularly common in conflict and post-conflict societies. Rape and domestic violence rates are escalating in South Africa, Rwanda, Peru and many other post-conflict societies, despite official support for gender equality and women's empowerment (WHO, 2013). While some of this crisis can be attributed to poverty, violence against women cuts across class, religious and cultural contexts. Clearly, widespread official commitment to gender mainstreaming and the MDGs has not disrupted long established hierarchies and masculinist practices. Gender equality and women's empowerment thus remain distant goals (Parpart, 2009: 56).

1.1.3. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development²

Figure 1.2: List of Sustainable Development Goals



Source: UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2015

Given that the MDGs were not achieved in their entirety before they expired in September 2015, UN member states agreed at the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 to facilitate a framework for the post-2015 development agenda with a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Spielfoch, 2013: 5). In May 2013, a report was released that lays the foundation for how the UN, after considerable deliberation and consultation with various

² The terms “post-2015 development agenda”, “Agenda 2030”, and “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” will be used interchangeably throughout this study to refer to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

global, regional, and local stakeholders, envisions development post-2015. Informal consultations on the post-2015 development agenda continued to take place within the UN General Assembly until a final list of 17 SDGs and 169 targets was unveiled at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York at the end of September 2015. See figure 1.2 for a list of the SDGs.

In addition to the priorities the MDGs set, Agenda 2030 recognises the effects of conflict and violence on development; emphasises the importance of good governance and effective institutions; as well as stresses the creation and provision of jobs. The framework also importantly concentrates on the integration of economic, social and political aspects of sustainable development, and the need to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production (UN, 2013). These advances may seem impressive, and indeed they are, but once more the post-2015 development agenda, like the MDGs that preceded it, does not adequately address the many additional challenges women face on the road to development.

The post-2015 development framework has on this basis been heavily critiqued by transnational women's organisations that claim, inter alia, that the framework does not address the growing inequalities between men and women; the feminisation of poverty; women's unpaid labour; human rights violation committed against women; or discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Furthermore, the framework lacks an integrated gender perspective and therefore is unable to identify the link between the multiple levels of discrimination girls and women face, and their greater experiences of poverty, deprivation and marginalisation (AWID, 2013). The framework is thus oblivious to the fact that gender equality is not just an objective in itself but that it is essential in achieving all development goals. Therefore, by continuing to represent women as vulnerable victims, rather than agents of change, Agenda 2030 fails to recognise one of the root causes of underdevelopment (AWID, 2012).

1.2. Problem Statement and Focus of Study

In 2015 the UN launched its new global target-setting development agenda that is aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring peace and prosperity for all by 2030. The SDGs replace the MDGs and have been lauded for widening their understanding of development to include environmental, social, economic and political concerns. Nevertheless, going into the new development era, gender inequality and women's rights abuses remain pervasive, especially in developing countries and post-conflict societies of which South Africa is a prime example. This study argues that this comes as a consequence of liberal feminism and associated economic

neoliberalism's employment as the dominant theoretical approaches informing both local and global development strategies. As a consequence development has favoured economic growth at the expense of addressing the structural foundations of women's subordination and oppression. This study argues that GAD and postcolonial feminism – two cognate theoretical approaches to women's development that seek to radically transform dominant gendered, racial and economic structures of power – would in their employment lead to substantive gender equality and women's empowerment. Based on this problem statement, this study seeks to highlight the value of postcolonial feminist contributions to development theory and practice. The study further aims to critique Agenda 2030 from a postcolonial feminist perspective with the ultimate aim of suggesting how this critique can inform South Africa's implementation of the SDGs so that substantive gender equality and women's empowerment in the country is achieved.

1.2.1. Research Questions and Aims of Study

In order to provide recommendations on how postcolonial feminist insights on development can inform the implementation of Agenda 2030 in South Africa – with the ultimate aim of achieving substantive gender equality in the country and empowering its women – this study's main research question was formulated as follows:

In accommodating the valuable critiques and recommendations of postcolonial feminism on development, how can Agenda 2030 inform South Africa's development and gender context?

In order to facilitate the answering of the main research question, three supportive research questions have been formulated. In order to define the study's main unit of analysis and to locate it within the broader context of women's development, the first supportive research question reads:

What is Agenda 2030 and how can it be positioned within the context of women's development?

Pertaining to the theoretical foundations informing this study, the remaining two supportive research questions read:

What are the limitations of liberal feminism and WID in informing transformative, sustainable and all-inclusive development frameworks?

and

What is the value and utility of postcolonial feminism and GAD, specifically in critiquing the SDGs and informing South Africa's implementation of Agenda 2030 in conjunction with its NDP?

The study's research questions will be answered in the following manner:

The literature review in Chapter 2 serves the purpose of answering the first supportive research question. The chapter traces the history of development (as well as the historical development of women's development theory) up to the launch of the SDGs in 2015. Apart from briefly critiquing the MDGs and their successor from a women's perspective, Chapter 2 also sketches South Africa's gender and development context and discusses the country's engagement with, and success in meeting, the MDGs.

Event though a short critique of WID and an appraisal of GAD is provided in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework in Chapter 3 has the main aim of answering the study's second and third supportive research questions. Chapter 3 contextualises postcolonial feminist theory, critiques liberal feminism and neoliberal economics from a postcolonial feminist development perspective, and highlights the value of postcolonial feminism in informing development theory and practice.

The main research question guides Chapter 4. The chapter critiques the SDGs from a postcolonial feminist perspective, drawing on five factors outlined in Chapter 3. The chapter also critiques South Africa's National Development Plan according to the same criteria and makes recommendations on how South Africa can implement the SDGs, taking into account the postcolonial feminist critiques on development provided in Chapter 3 and 4.

1.2.2. Contribution of the Study

The study contributes to existing literature in two ways. First, given that Agenda 2030 has only recently emerged as a topic for investigation, not a considerable amount of academic work has been published on the subject. Recent literature mainly focuses on the operational transition from the MDGs to the SDGs and offers recommendations on how the goals can be nationally adapted and implemented in order to achieve certain objectives. One area of concern that has recently received sizable attention relates to the SDG targets on health. This cannot be said for gender equality and women's empowerment. The strongest critiques in this regard are emanating from transnational women's organisations. These organisations' critiques on Agenda 2030 will be reviewed in Chapter 2. In addition, the most recent issue of *Gender and*

Development 24(1) focuses on gender and the Sustainable Development Goals. This literature is drawn on in Chapter 4. This study therefore contributes to the thus far scant literature critiquing Agenda 2030 from a gender or women's perspective.

Secondly, even though feminist theory and postcolonial feminism in particular are extensively employed to critique development, no literature exists that specifically employs a feminist theory to critique the MDGs or Agenda 2030. This study therefore contributes to this body of literature by employing one specific feminist theory, namely postcolonial feminism, to critique the SDGs, and to offer recommendations on their improvement.

1.3. Theoretical framework

This study employs a postcolonial feminist theoretical framework to analyse the identified research problem. A theoretical framework is a system of ideas or conceptual structures that help us to understand, explain and change the world (Conelly, Li, MacDonald & Parpart, 2000: 54). Postcolonial feminism is a critical theory, which in contrast to positivist theories is normative, meaning that instead of explaining reality, it provides proposals for how the world could and should be improved (Cudd, 2005: 164). Importantly, critical theory also supports the development of theories that emphasise, as well as attempt to dismantle, structures of domination (Price & Reus-Smit, 199: 261). Postcolonial feminism(s)³ are principally committed to

- a) critique 'Western' liberal feminism for 'othering' and victimising Third World women by presenting them as primitive and backward, uniformly poor, powerless and vulnerable, thereby securing 'whiteness' and 'First Worldism' as structures of privilege within feminist frameworks; and
- b) to formulate "autonomous, geographically, historically, and culturally grounded" feminist theory (Mohanty, 1991: 51).

Even though much more can be said about the main theoretical contributions of postcolonial feminism as a whole, this study has the particular aim of examining the work of postcolonial feminists on the subject of development. This study regards postcolonial feminism as a particularly useful theory in critiquing development agendas given that up to the launch of the

³ It is important to consider that postcolonial feminism is not a monolithic unified project that assumes and articulates a universal set of epistemological assumptions. Instead it is a broad church of theoretical formulations that have developed out of the diverse experiences and realities of women from multiple geographical locations and historical contexts.

SDGs in 2015, the majority of global development agendas have been informed by liberal feminism and economic neoliberalism and have rarely consulted affected states, civil society groups or local individuals about their priorities and needs. Instead of being influenced by indigenous knowledges, and instead of allowing locals to set the agenda, global development frameworks such as the MDGs have allowed Western priorities and interests to take precedence in the formulation of policies. Postcolonial feminists argue that in advancing Eurocentrism and imperialism (Cudd, 2005: 172), global development frameworks have failed to engage with alternative ways of perceiving development and have therefore missed the opportunity of developing more challenging alternatives (Briggs & Sharp, 2004: 661). By reinforcing the unequal relationship between the developed North and the developing South, top-down development strategies have further exacerbated the inability to create alliances and solidarity between the Global North and South, as well as between First and Third World women, which postcolonial feminists regard as essential in challenging and transforming relations and structures of power that are responsible for widening inequalities between and within states in the first place (Cudd, 2005: 176; Burman, 1995: 21).

In response to the above-mentioned critiques, postcolonial feminism seeks to recover the voices of marginalised, oppressed and dominated Third World women by creating development agendas that draw on the complex experiences and knowledges of the communities they affect (McEwan, 2001: 95-96). The theory further aims to create a conducive environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential by recognising their agency and choice-making capacity (Chandler, 2013: 5). It thus grants individuals the opportunity to independently reason about what they really want and allows them to choose freely what is in their and their society's best interest (Chandler, 2013: 19). Postcolonial feminism ultimately seeks to create a world in which Third World women can live safe and decent lives according to how they define a good life (Abu-Lughod, 2001: 789).

In contrast to liberal feminism, postcolonial feminists argue that superficial law reform which guarantees that women have equal opportunities with men to participate in economic life is not sufficient in instigating substantive gender equality and women's empowerment. Instead postcolonial feminists seek to fundamentally challenge and transform dominant patriarchal, racial and economic power structures, both in the public and private domain. Derived from this aim, they recognise that gender equality has interconnected economic, political and social dimensions and that the power inequalities imbedded in these dimensions need to be challenged (Ravazi, 2016: 29). In order to achieve this development needs to recognise women's and girl's

roles as agents of change as well as establish the links between individual agency, collective action and structural transformation (Stuart & Woodroffe, 2016: 76; Sardenberg, 2008: 19).

Another valuable contribution postcolonial feminism has made to women's development theory is that it recognises that not all women face the same measure of oppression but that gender inequality intersects with multiple and overlapping inequalities based on class, race, sexuality, disability and other systems of oppression. The theory shows that most Third World women face double or triple oppression because they are not only discriminated on the basis of their gender but also on the basis of other, perhaps more important factors (Dube, 2001: 214). The theory seeks to ensure that all women benefit equally from development interventions and that no marginalised group is left behind.

Furthermore, postcolonial feminists recognise that neoliberal globalism disrupts the realisation of human rights, worsens gender equality, and is harmful to the environment (Bidegain Ponte & Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 90). They highlight that women's increased labour force participation has been met with increasing gender-based discrimination and segregation in labour markets, and that the precarious nature of contemporary wage labour is dependent on the exploitation of poor, racialised women (Bidegain Ponte & Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 89). In contrast to liberal feminism, postcolonial feminism not only focuses on the productive aspects of women's work but further recognises that women's unpaid domestic, reproductive and care labour contributes to the economy. They argue that the drudgery of unpaid reproductive labour needs to be reduced and redistributed between women and men (Ravazi, 2016: 31).

1.4. Research Design and Research Methods

1.4.1. Research Design

The research design that has been selected for this study is a case study design. According to Yin (2009: 4) the case study method is an ideal approach to attempt to understand complex social phenomena and is therefore commonly used as a research method in the social sciences. The case study method would therefore be used if the researcher wanted to understand a contemporary real-life phenomenon in-depth, especially given if such understanding involved important contextual conditions that are highly relevant to the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2009: 18). The case study design was selected as the research design for this study because it allows a wealth of detailed information to be collected on a specific phenomenon so as to achieve a relatively complete account of the particular phenomenon being studied.

A specific case study, namely the implementation of Agenda 2030 in South Africa, has been selected for several reasons. Firstly, South Africa is a developing country and post-conflict society, which has adopted many of the development objectives outlined in the MDGs, but is yet to achieve many of the MDG targets and indicators (UNDP SA, 2013: 18-20). Secondly, despite South Africa's strong legal framework on gender equality and women's rights, or its high percentage of women's representation in Parliament, on the ground, discriminatory practices, social norms and persistent stereotypes frequently shape inequitable access to opportunities, resources and power for both women and girls (StatsSA, 2011: vi). Furthermore, other gender-related challenges persist, including unacceptable levels of gender-based violence, discriminating traditional laws, harmful cultural practices, as well as violent manifestations of masculinity and patriarchy. These challenges are not addressed in South Africa's National Development Plan. Gender equality and women's empowerment therefore remain distant goals.

1.4.2. Research Methods

A case study design, even though it can generate both quantitative and qualitative data, in this particular study calls for a qualitative research methodology because the latter generates a wealth of data on one specific case. This implies that the data cannot be used to generalise about a wider population or area because the case study is unique and not representative of all developing countries for example (Burnham *et al*, 2008: 64). Even though this study is not hypothesis testing or generalisation producing, Peshkin (1993: 23) shows that qualitative research methods have the ability to describe, interpret, verify and evaluate data gathered on the studied phenomenon. This is ultimately what this study seeks to achieve:

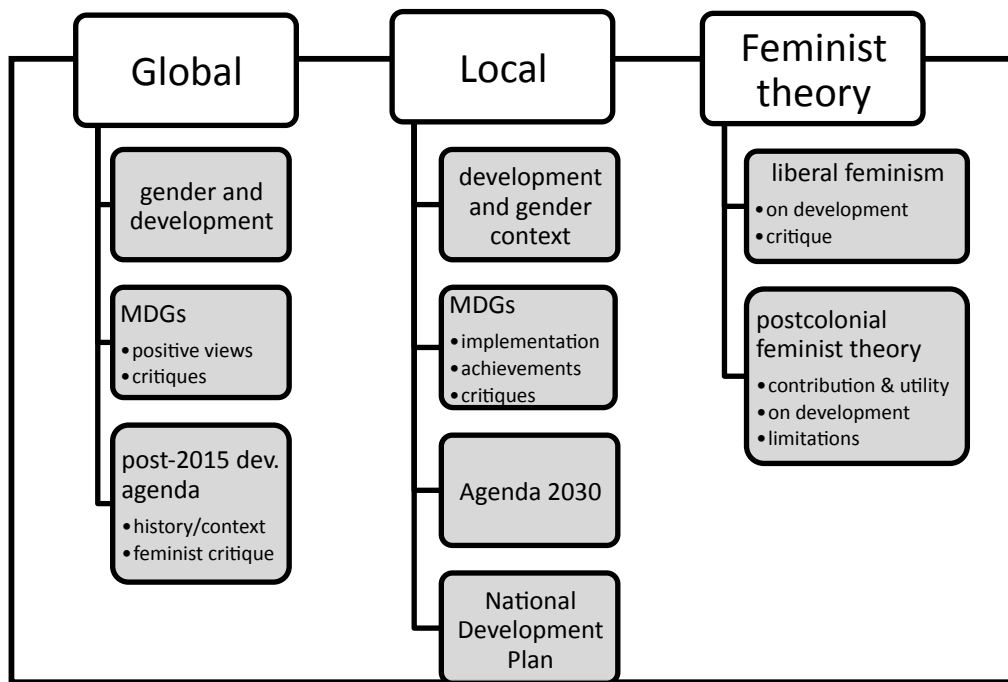
1. To describe the history of women's development and the process that has led to the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs;
2. To interpret postcolonial feminist literature on development in order to provide insights that may change behaviour, refine knowledge, or identify problems on a local level (Peshkin, 1993: 24);
3. To verify that postcolonial theories on development are applicable to the real-life gender and development context in South Africa; and
4. To evaluate the MDGs, Agenda 2030, and South Africa's NDP according to the critiques and recommendations of postcolonial feminist scholars on development.

Given that the study's research questions are exploratory in nature, meaning that they ask the "how" or "what" question, they can best be answered through the collection of mainly

secondary sources, including books, journal articles, newspaper sources and web sites, as well as grey literature, including government reports and policy documents from the UN, its affiliated organisations, other multilateral government institutions, and transnational as well as local NGOs. Based on timely and ethical constraints as well as the complexity of the phenomena under investigation, no primary field data in the form of interviews, focus groups or surveys was collected. This implies that the research process takes the form of a desktop study.

Secondary sources were mainly obtained from the University of Stellenbosch library as well as its online databases. The books and journal articles that were collected mostly centre on the topics of postcolonial feminism, its standpoints on development, as well as other feminist critiques on, and evaluations of, the MDGs, Agenda 2030 and South Africa's NDP. The keywords that were used to find and identify these sources were derived from the four research questions. These keywords, which include amongst others "postcolonial feminism", "gender", "development", "critique", "MDGs", "Agenda 2030", "SDGs", and "South Africa", were entered into the library's databases separately as well as in various combinations in order to find the most relevant literature on the phenomena under investigation.

Grey literature was obtained from various international as well as local governmental and non-governmental organisations' websites. Policy documents sourced from the UN and its partner organisations mainly deal with the history of the MDGs and Agenda 2030, as well as the implementation of the MDGs both internationally and locally. South African government reports were obtained from the government and its various departments' websites. These reports centre on the implementation and success of the MDGs in South Africa; South Africa's own development strategies; the country's development indicators; and other statistics on development and gender equality. Transnational women's organisations' websites were the source of critiques on the SDGs. South African women's organisations' websites were also consulted for documents surrounding the gender dimensions of the implementation of the MDGs locally. Once a document was obtained it was grouped into one or more of the clusters that were created in order to sort the data according to the relevant phenomena under investigation. The diagram below (Figure 1.3) illustrates how the various clusters used in the data gathering process were ordered. Note that linkages between the various clusters were established in the analysis of the data.

Figure 1.3: Diagrammatic Illustration of the Data Clustering Process

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the gathered textual data. Under qualitative methods of analysis the researcher determines the importance of the content of the data by means of his/her judgement. Therefore the researcher decides on the value, interest and originality of the material. S/he determines which documents are appropriate sources of evidence and then selects a sample of texts to investigate and analyse (Burnham *et al*, 2008: 259). In this study, the researcher determined the importance, relevance, and value of the textual data by referring back to the research questions, and the main aims and focus of the study in its entirety, as well as those of the various chapters.

1.4.3. Limitations and Delimitations

This study is confronted with a number of limitations, of which only those of a methodological and theoretical nature will be discussed. Firstly, the researcher acknowledged from the onset of the study that time constraints and ethical dilemmas would hamper the collection of primary field data. This study had a timeframe of one year, which was far too limited to prepare for, as well as collect, primary field data, especially given that permission from the ethics committee of the university would first have to be granted. Therefore the holding of interviews, which would have proved a valuable source of data for this study, had to be abandoned. The study would have benefited from in-depth unstructured interviews with South African experts in the field of development and gender studies, as well as professionals from local NGOs whose organisations share an interest in the goals set out in the post-2015 development framework.

This methodological limitation was addressed by adjusting the research focus, and formulating the research questions, in such a manner that even though no field data was collected, the results of the research would still be valid and reliable. The researcher, thus, instead of relying on the insights and opinions of relevant stakeholders, borrowed from the work of postcolonial feminist scholars and their assessment of the contemporary field of development in order to analyse Agenda 2030 from a South African gender perspective. Therefore, in order to compensate for the methodological limitation of the study, the researcher accordingly employed a theoretical perspective.

The second limitation pertains to theory. All feminist theories provide valuable insights and critiques on development, and this study could easily have borrowed from the contributions of radical-, socialist-, standpoint-, and ecofeminists. The researcher consciously did not employ a liberal feminist framework, given that most development policies have thus far relied on this theory as a basis for addressing issues of gender equality. The researcher thus wanted to explore the insights and contributions of other feminist theories, including those that are listed above. For purposes of clarity and simplicity, however, only one theory was chosen to act as a guiding framework for this study, namely postcolonial feminism. The researcher does not regard this theory as superior to any other feminist theories, but chose postcolonial theory for its usefulness and suitability to the case study of South Africa's women. One of the main critical insights of postcolonial feminism is that women of the developing world should no longer be seen as powerless and passive victims, but that their voices should be heard, their agencies respected and their ideas incorporated into local development projects (McEwan, 2001: 96). As the remainder of this study will show, South African women would more than likely benefit if this view was to be shared by South African development practitioners.

1.5. Outline of the Study

Chapter 1 provided a brief introduction to the study as well as a framework of how the study will be carried out. The chapter therefore identified the study's research focus, questions and aims; the research methodology and theoretical framework that will be employed to analyse the case study; as well as the limitations and delimitations of the research.

Chapter 2 offers a more in-depth and detailed contextualisation of the study by reviewing literature on a variety of topics pertinent to the questions and aims of the research. The literature review provides a brief background to the history and advancement of women's development from its onset in the 1960s, upon which it discusses how the MDGs reflect, or rather disregard,

the advancements made in terms of women and development theory. The chapter will highlight the MDGs' extensive failure in achieving many development objectives, especially gender equality and the fulfilment of women's human rights. The chapter will thereafter review how the SDGs build on the failure of the MDGs and provide an alternative framework for sustainable development after 2015. Thereupon the literature review will present the critiques various transnational women's organisations have voiced on the new development agenda. Lastly, it will reflect on South Africa's gender environment and the country's position on women's development as reflected through the implementation of the MDG framework, the government's own National Development Plan (NDP), and its rapport with the SDGs.

Chapter 3 provides the postcolonial feminist theoretical framework according to which the case study is analysed in Chapter 4. The chapter examines the limitations of Western liberal feminism and WID and explores in what way postcolonial feminist theory and GAD provides a more suitable and encompassing theoretical basis, not only to critique existing development frameworks, but also to create more transformative and inclusive development agendas capable of eradicating gender inequality and empowering women.

Chapter 4 applies the theoretical framework provided in Chapter 3 to the case study, which is the implementation of Agenda 2030 in South Africa. The chapter begins by briefly critiquing the MDGs, upon demonstrating that the SDGs vastly improve on their predecessor by broadening their conception of sustainable development. Thereafter, Agenda 2030 is critiqued on the basis of five themes outlined in Chapter 3. Postcolonial feminism is also employed to critique South Africa's NDP. The chapter subsequently recommends how these critiques can inform South Africa's implementation of Agenda 2030 so that substantive gender equality and women's empowerment in the country is achieved.

Chapter Five concludes this study by providing a summary of the findings and an evaluation of the research conducted. The chapter also offers recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2: POVERTY'S FEMALE FACE: A HISTORY

2.1. Introduction

In order to fulfil the aim of this study, which is to provide a postcolonial feminist critique on the Sustainable Development Goals, and to apply this critique as a frame of reference to suggest how South Africa could improve on its current development plan, with the particular focus on ending gender inequality and empowering women, it is necessary to first contextualise and give background to a number of issues and topics that are pertinent to the research questions and aims of the study outlined in Chapter 1. The research question, which will form the foundation of this chapter, is: *What is Agenda 2030 and how can it be positioned in the context of women's development?* In order to answer this question, the chapter reviews literature on the history and progression of women's development theory and how the MDGs reflect, or rather disregard, the advancements made in terms of women's development. The literature review appraises the progress that has been made in terms of the attainment of the MDGs, specifically in relation to the gender-related goals and targets. The chapter will show that the MDGs were highly unsuccessful in advancing the development of the Global South, and specifically attending to issues of gender inequality and women's rights abuses. The Chapter will thereafter review how the SDGs build on the failure of the MDGs and provide an alternative framework for sustainable development after 2015, upon which it will review the critiques various transnational women's organisations have voiced on the new development agenda. Lastly the literature review will examine South Africa's gender environment as well as the country's position on women's development as reflected through the implementation of the MDG framework, the government's own National Development Plan (NDP), and the country's rapport with Agenda 2030.

2.2. The History of Women's Development

Development studies emerged as a discipline in the mid-twentieth century in the aftermath of World War II and with the beginning of decolonisation. As more and more colonies gained independence from their imperial masters, Western nations, especially the United States, became concerned about the underdevelopment, poverty, and meagre living standards within the emerging Third World. Development studies therefore focused on how these developing nations could be lifted out of poverty. The UN consequently declared the 1960s as the first Development Decade. This declaration did however make no reference to women as a separate entity (Kabeer, 1994: 1), implying that development experts assumed that the development process affected men and women in the same way (Momsen, 2010: 11). In the 1950s and 60s it

was popularly believed that “modernisation”, i.e. industrialisation, would improve the living standards of Third World citizens. This assumption was accompanied by the belief that the norm of the male experience was also translatable to females and that everyone would benefit equally as a society increasingly modernised. This was, however, not the case. By the 1970s researchers showed that the relative position of women had improved very little over the previous two decades, and that in some instances it had in fact declined (Rathgeber, 1989: 20). Ester Boserup, who published her landmark book *Women’s Role in Economic Development* in 1970, famously argued that development projects further marginalised women instead of benefitting them (Pearson, 2005: 158). She argued that in countries throughout the developing world, women played a vital economic role, but that the division of labour within these societies had been strongly disrupted by the effects of colonisation, modernisation, and the introduction of the international market economy (Reddock, 2000: 34). Boserup advocated that development schemes had to be re-evaluated and that the economic survival and development of the Third World heavily depended on the integration and incorporation of women into the development process (Parpart, 1989: 3 & Reddock, 2000: 34). Her book was highly acclaimed, given that a series of social movements, specifically the re-emergence of the feminist movement in the West, as well as the civil rights movement in the United States, also gained ground during this period (Kabeer, 1994: 2).

As a result of these developments, the UN declared 1975 as International Women’s year and the following ten years (1976-1985) as the UN Decade for Women. During these ten years, three world conferences were held: one in Mexico City in 1975, one in Copenhagen in 1980, and one in Nairobi in 1985. A fourth world conference was also held in Beijing in 1995, which produced a Platform for Action which focused on how to achieve gender equality, and called for the equal participation of women policy-makers and the need for a gender perspective to run throughout all phases of policy-making (gender mainstreaming) (Krook and True, 2010: 112).

The term “women in development” or WID was first used by women’s groups in the United States to bring the evidence garnered by Boserup and other development researchers to the attention of American policymakers. American feminists employed the term to call for legal and administrative changes that would ensure that women would be better integrated into economic systems (Rathgeber, 1990: 490). The paradigm recognised that the female experience of development differed from that of men and therefore validated that research could focus specifically on women’s experiences and perceptions of development projects. The WID approach was strongly rooted in liberal feminism and modernisation theory, and therefore

accepted existing social structures, instead of questioning why women did not benefit from development schemes during the 1960s (Rathgeber, 1990: 491). WID advocates maintained that the solution to the problem was to increase women's participation in the labour market, which would therefore bring them closer to men's traditional roles (Pearson, 2005: 160 & Krook and True, 2010: 115). This nonconfrontational approach ignored the sources and nature of women's subordination and oppression, instead rather advocating for more equal participation in education, employment and other spheres of society (Rathgeber, 1990: 491). As a result the WID paradigm disregarded the impact of global inequities on Third World women, as well as the importance and influence of women's class, race and culture (Connelly, Li, MacDonald and Parpart, 2000: 59 & Rathgeber, 1990: 492). Women and gender were regarded as one unit of analysis, therefore discounting important divisions of labour, as well the relations of exploitation that exist among women. The WID approach further focused exclusively on the productive aspects of women's work, therefore ignoring or minimising their reproductive and care roles (Rathgeber, 1990: 492). Singh (2007: 104) argues that Western liberal feminists who developed the WID framework supported a capitalist and modernist development agenda that favoured economic growth at the expense of social and cultural concerns because it validated their own positions of privilege in the world system. As a consequence, they discounted the agency of women in developing societies while simultaneously misrepresenting their diverse local realities (Singh, 2007: 100, 104).

Towards the end of the 1970s a new theoretical framework emerged that was grounded in Marxism and Dependency Theory. Termed Women and Development (WAD), this new approach reflected the growing dissatisfaction with the outcomes of capitalism that amongst others increased the dependence of formally socialist nations on capitalist states (Singh, 2007: 104). As André Gunder Frank famously argued in his 1966 article, "The Development of Underdevelopment", capitalism, both global and local, was quintessentially responsible for the underdevelopment of the Third World (Kay, 2005: 1178). WAD advocates argued that the notion of "integrating women into development", as prescribed under the WID paradigm, served primarily to sustain existing global structures of inequality, and to maintain the economic dependency of Third World countries on industrialised states (Rathgeber, 1990: 491; 492). WAD's analysis of development represented women as one of many exploited classes within the capitalist system (Singh, 2007: 104), thereby also downplaying the differences between women, especially those along racial and ethnic lines (Connelly, Li, MacDonald and Parpart, 2000: 61). WAD supporters argued that women's positions would improve if and when international structures became more equitable (Rathgeber, 1990: 493).

During the 1980s the Gender and Development (GAD) perspective emerged as an alternative to WID and WAD. This approach emanated from postcolonial feminist scholars as well as grass-roots women's organisations, of which DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) was the most influential. Members of DAWN recognised that previous theoretical frameworks on development did nothing to improve the lives of Third World women, and that a broader, more comparative approach was needed to address women's development problems. The network's aim was to break down all structures of gender subordination and to empower women so that they could equally participate with men at all levels of societal life (Parpart, 1989: 10). The GAD perspective recognises that women's status in society is profoundly affected by their material conditions as well as their positions in the national, regional, and global economies. GAD also focuses on the interconnection of gender, class and race and the social construction of their defining characteristics. It consequently argues that women experience oppression differently, in accordance with their race, class, colonial history, culture, and position in the international economy. Furthermore, the GAD approach recognises that development policies have different impacts on woman and men and that women should consequently be seen as agents of change, and not simply passive recipients of development (Connelly, Li, MacDonald and Parpart, 2000: 62-63). In sum, the primary focus of GAD has been to examine *why* women have systematically been assigned inferior and/or secondary roles. Singh (2007: 104) has therefore argued that the approach is revolutionary in terms of its focus on patriarchy and social inequality instead of production and economic growth.

Nevertheless, despite these theoretical advances, WID remains the dominant approach of governments, relief and development agencies (including the UN), and bilateral donor agencies. In some cases, policies and programmes have adopted GAD as a newer, perhaps more fashionable label, but clearly continue to work within the WID framework. Some agencies only adopt the term "gender" to reassure men that their interests and concerns are not being overlooked or undermined by the excessive focus on women (Connelly, Li, MacDonald and Parpart, 2000: 64). Rathgeber (1990: 495) adds that a fully articulated GAD perspective is rarely incorporated into the projects of international development organisations, mainly due to the fact that the approach is difficult to integrate into continuing development programmes and strategies, given that it demands a degree of structural change that national and international agencies have found difficult to instigate. For these and other reasons, labels no longer provide a clear guide to identify the underlying policies and programmes, and therefore their content needs to be examined more closely (Connelly, Li, MacDonald and Parpart, 2000: 64).

Even though the remainder of this chapter will briefly touch on how both the MDGs and the SDGs reflect a strong liberal or WID underpinning, chapter three will provide a comprehensive critique of liberal feminism, and specifically its continued utilisation as a foundation for current development projects and programmes. The chapter will also suggest that postcolonial feminism, a theory that is strongly reflected in the GAD approach, provides a better alternative in which to base development projects that specifically address women's development issues. This theoretical framework will form the basis of chapter four, in which Agenda 2030 will be critiqued based on its relevance to South Africa's gender and development context. This chapter will now discuss the evolution of the MDGs, the ensuing transition to the SDGs, and the consequent implications for women in the developing world.

2.3. The History of the Millennium Development Goals

During the 1990s the UN held a series of conferences devoted to the cause of international development, which ultimately led to the unveiling of the Millennium Development Goals at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000 (Hulme & Scott, 2012: 294). Development discourse underwent a complete transformation as a result of these UN conferences, which introduced new concepts such as sustainability, participation, good governance, poverty reduction, gender, globalisation, and market-orientation (Ziai, 2011: 28). The World Summit for Children which took place in 1990 laid the cornerstone for the MDGs by setting specific goals for infant, under-five and maternal mortality; universal access to education; reduction in malnutrition; and universal access to safe water and sanitation. The first UN Development Report was also released in 1990. For the remainder of the decade several other conferences took place that were devoted to development, human rights, population, social development, women and the environment (Melamed & Summer, 2011: 2). See table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Summary of Important UN Development Conferences and Reports in the 1990s

Year	Conferences / Documents
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Summit for Children (New York) • Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Paris) • World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien) • First United Nations Development Report • World Bank World Development Report
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro) • International Conference on Nutrition (Rome)
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna)

1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo) • Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Bridgetown)
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen) • Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing)
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat II: Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul) • World Food Summit (Rome) • Mid-Decade Meeting on Education for All (Amman)
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyoto Protocol (Kyoto)
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Assembly 21st special session (New York)
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millennium Summit of the United Nations (New York)

Source: United Nations – Development: Conferences and Summits, 2013

By 1998 plans were underway for a UN Millennium Summit at which a set of global development goals would be unveiled (Melamed & Summer, 2011: 3). Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General at the time, saw the Summit as an opportunity to raise ambitions and address key issues on which not enough progress had been made (Hulme, 2009: 25). He therefore appointed John Ruggie, a distinguished American academic, to prepare a coherent declaration for the United Nations Millennium Assembly, which was scheduled to take place in New York in September. The report, entitled “We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century” was released in April 2000. The report’s main focus was on poverty eradication and freedom from want (Hulme, 2009: 26). Disappointingly, the 1995 Beijing Women’s Conference goals on gender equality, women’s empowerment and reproductive health did not feature at all. Instead, the document prioritised economic growth, technology, the environment, Africa’s problems, and setting goals for developed countries (Hulme & Scott, 2010: 296).

“We the Peoples” formed the foundation of the Millennium Declaration, which was approved unanimously at the Millennium Assembly on 8 September 2000 (Hulme & Scott, 2010: 296-297). The Millennium Declaration was made up of eleven goals (later reduced to eight) pertaining to: extreme poverty; education; infant, child and maternal mortality; major diseases; AIDS orphans; improving the lives of slum dwellers; decent work for the youth; the benefits of technology; national policies and programmes for poverty reduction; the special needs of small island states and landlocked developing countries; as well as goals for rich countries (Hulme, 2009: 34-35).

How the Millennium Declaration's goals were to be achieved, was outlined in the "Road Map Towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (Hulme & Scott, 2010: 297). The Millennium Development Goals, consisting of eight goals, 21 targets and 60 indicators, were finally unveiled at the UN General Assembly on 6 September 2001 (Hulme, 2009: 42). See Appendix A for a full list of the MDGs and their targets.

The MDGs represented a global consensus on the main priorities for tackling poverty and their ultimate goal was to end human suffering from hunger, destitution and disease, specifically in the developing world (UNDP, 2012: 125). Hulme (2009) therefore termed the goals "the world's biggest promise". Proponent voices largely emanated from UN agencies claiming that the MDGs have contributed significantly to social and economic development (UNDP, 2012: 126). These voices also claim that the Goals have galvanised international support; have focused international attention on the multiple dimensions of poverty and the complexity of the development process; have led to increased aid and other investments in development; and have placed greater emphasis on results through data collection and analysis (UNDP, 2012: 126-127).

Kofi Annan (2010: 116), the architect of the MDGs, agrees by arguing that the MDGs have given direction to national development efforts and that they have increased international co-operation. Elsen (2010: 117) describes the MDGs as "a beacon and an inspiration" that has "brought international attention to the world's development challenges" and has therefore made development co-operation more effective. Annan (2010: 117; 118) goes on to argue that the Goals have improved millions of people's lives and that they have hastened economic growth and social development. He asserts that the MDGs were attainable even in the most resource-deprived and insecure circumstances (Annan, 2010: 117). Even though he acknowledges that the achievement of certain goals failed, he attributes this failure mainly to the global financial crisis and its aftermath, and more importantly, the inefficiency of developing countries to implement nationally defined development policies (Annan, 2010: 118; 119).

What remains questionable is that rich countries were primarily responsible for the formulation of the MDGs with barely any input from lower- and middle-income countries that are ultimately the subjects of the Goals (Hulme & Scott, 2010: 297). Concerns were also voiced over the reductionist nature of the targets, meaning that the complex nature of under-development, and the process to counter it, was reduced to a mere eight goals without acknowledging the inter-linkages between the goals; the prioritisation of social and human development over economic aspects related to employment and infrastructure; the focus on the symptoms of poverty rather

than the underlying causes; as well what effect the goals would have on national ownership of development priorities (Melamed & Summer, 2011: 4).

Spieldoch (2013: 5) agrees with Melamed and Summer (2011) on the fact that the MDGs did not address the root causes of poverty, specifically women's inequality, which made it impossible for the goals to be truly transformative. Even though the last 15 years have seen substantial economic growth, this growth has been significantly uneven and has widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots (Spieldoch, 2013: 3).

Approximately 800 million people in the world are still undernourished (IFPRI, 2015); a fact that is even more alarming, given that half of the global food supply is wasted or lost (Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 2013). Although women cultivate more than half of the food that is grown, they are the majority of the world's hungry (World Food Programme, 2015). Just under a quarter of the world's population lives at or below \$1.90 a day, and another 2.1 billion people are living on less than \$3.10 a day (World Bank, 2015). Around two thirds of the one billion people living in extreme poverty are women and they make up 40 per cent of the 400 million working poor globally (ILO, 2014). Rural women are even more vulnerable to poverty and hunger (World Food Programme, 2015), given that they own less than 20 per cent of the land globally (UN FAO, 2010).

Furthermore 60 million people are displaced because of conflict or persecution (UNHCR, 2015) and almost half of the world's poor are expected to live in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence by 2030 (World Bank, 2015). One billion people live in slums without basic services and protection (UN Habitat, 2013). Gender inequality and gender-based violence (GBV) is widespread (UNFPA, 2016). Finally, international institutions have lacked the coherence to address these major challenges, as was evident through the food, energy and financial crises. Spieldoch (2013: 3) further highlights that women and girls bear the burden of these crises because of their social status and their care roles in the economy.

This data begs one to question the supposed value and effectiveness of the MDGs in bringing about sustainable development. The MDGs have in effect omitted almost a billion people from their poverty reduction target and have failed to address the apparent structural causes of this poverty. They have further not succeeded in acknowledging the effect of economic, environmental and conflict-related shocks in driving more people into destitution. Last but not least, they have failed horribly at providing the world's poorest and most vulnerable with social protection, security and equal opportunity (Melamed & Summer, 2011: 22). This has led even

the IMF to regard the MDGs of little relevance (Hulme & Scott, 2010: 302). Therefore the question needed to be asked: what, if anything should take their place once they expired in 2015?

As suggested under Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document that was adopted at the UN General Assembly in December 1948, with the purpose of preventing the atrocities that were committed during World War II, the right to development is regarded as an inalienable human right (Hulme & Scott, 2010: 303). Article 25 reads,

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control (UDHR, 1948).

This right therefore confers obligations onto the international community to ensure that it is acted upon. In this regard, it has to be recognised that the prospects for the world's poor depends largely on the political and economic interests of powerful international actors, and that global poverty has structural dimensions which cannot single-handedly be addressed on a local level (Poku & Whitman, 2011: 188). Therefore a new development framework is crucial to confer normative expectations onto states in order for them to become or remain committed and obligated to the development project (Poku & Whitman, 2011: 190).

The MDGs were unable to explicitly link international organisation and poverty and therefore reflected the interests of powerful states and institutional momentum (Poku & Whitman, 2011: 189). It was thus up to the post-2015 development agenda to recognise this fact and to effectively act upon it. Therefore, it was vital that the post-2015 development framework is not based on the priorities of the West but that is founded on what poor people themselves consider the main obstacles to achieving sustainable livelihoods (Melamed & Summer, 2011: 32).

2.4. Agenda 2030: A History

Given the history of development and its apparent failure to address the key challenges which it was committed to overcome, a new framework needed to be established that could replace the MDGs and rectify their shortcomings. This new development framework needed to be effective before the MDGs expired in September 2015. The following section will discuss the process that went into establishing the post-2015 development framework.

Vandemoortele (2009: 4) identified four objectives that needed to be fulfilled in order to improve on the outcomes of the MDGs, namely: to reshape the structure of the set of goals and targets, to redefine the type of benchmarks, to set new quantitative targets, and to fix a new time horizon. It would also be important that the new framework aimed to reduce disparities in development progress between countries. In order to augment the effectiveness of a possible new development agenda, Vandemoortele (2009: 11) further argued that it should specifically be led by stakeholders from developing countries. Poku and Whitman (2011: 190) added that more reliable and revealing data needed to be collected so as to establish the real impact of the development agenda. Furthermore, normative expectations had to be conferred onto states in terms of their commitments and obligations towards the development project.

The post-2015 women's coalition, a coalition of feminist, women's rights, women's development, grassroots and social justice organisations that work to challenge and reframe the global development agenda, also called for the post-2015 development agenda to be explicitly shaped by, and grounded in, human rights, including the principles of equality and non-discrimination; to place gender equality, women's human rights and women's empowerment at its core; to address the structural factors that perpetuate crisis, inequality, insecurity, and human rights violations; to be developed with the meaningful and substantive participation and leadership of women; to ensure that economic interests are not allowed to override the greater aim of respecting human rights and promoting sustainable development through clear regulations; as well as to ensure strong mechanisms for accountability within countries and at the international level (Post-2015 Women's Coalition, 2014). Upon having explained the process that went into establishing the post-2015 development agenda, this section as well as the subsequent section will comment on whether the above-mentioned terms requested by Vandemoortele and the Post-2015 Women's Coalition have been met.

The outcome document of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the MDGs requested the UN Secretary General to start thinking about a post-2015 development agenda (ECOSOC, 2013). The Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which took place in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, resulted in an agreement among governments to facilitate the framework for a post-2015 development agenda with a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Spieldoch, 2013: 5).

In order to assist with the creation of a post-2015 development agenda, the Secretary General established the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP). The team brought together the efforts of more than 60 UN and international organisations (ECOSOC, 2013). Its mission was to assess ongoing efforts within the UN system, to consult with relevant stakeholders, and to define a vision and plan of action. In June 2012, in preparation for the Rio +20 Summit, the UN Task Team prepared a report entitled “Realising the Future We all Want”, which set the stage for thinking about a post-2015 development framework (Spieldoch, 2013: 5).

In July 2012, the Secretary General launched his High Level Panel of Eminent Persons to provide guidance and recommendations on the post-2015 development agenda. The panel’s 27 members included representatives from the private sector, academia, civil society and local authorities (ECOSOC, 2013). The Panel’s responsibility was to contribute to the post-2015 development agenda by identifying key principles for shaping global partnerships, strengthened accountability mechanisms, and measures to build political consensus around three dimensions: economic growth, social equality and environmental sustainability (Spieldoch, 2013: 5). The Panel published its Report entitled “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development” in May 2013 (ECOSOC, 2013). This report also proposed a set of Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

The main focus of the High Level Panel (HLP) Report was intended to revolve around universal human rights. The Report advanced the aim of reaching the poorest and most excluded of the world’s population and to recognise and act on the effects of conflict and violence on development. Furthermore it emphasised the importance of good governance and institutions that guarantee the rule of law, freedom of expression, and open and accountable government. The report acknowledged the importance of inclusive growth in the creation and provision of jobs. Finally, and very importantly, the report concentrated on the integration of economic, social and political aspects of sustainable development and the need to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production (UN, 2013).

Melamed (2013) argues that the HLP report goes well beyond the essence of the MDGs, which focused on health, education and poverty, by also covering infrastructure, property rights, governance, violence and personal safety, an end to discrimination, and gender equality. The report further suggests aiming for zero targets, such as zero people living in poverty, and combines this with nationally defined rates of progress towards these ends. According to Melamed (2013) the report explicitly identifies that discrimination and inequality (with regards to gender and beyond) limits opportunities and creates poverty. Therefore, disaggregated data

will be collected and particular attention will be paid to the bottom 20 per cent of the world's population when it comes to analysing progress towards all targets.

As per request of the General Assembly, a 30 member Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals was also established in January 2013 that was tasked to prepare a proposal on a set of SDGs. The group involved relevant stakeholders, including members from civil society, the scientific community, and the United Nations system in the process of deliberating a list of SDGs. The group proposed a set of 17 goals and 169 targets in July 2014 (see Appendix B for a full list of the SDGs and their targets). Hereafter, informal consultations on the post-2015 development agenda took place in the UN General Assembly with the involvement of Major Groups and other civil society stakeholders. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary General to synthesise the full range of inputs that went into establishing the new development agenda and to present a synthesis report at the end of 2014 as a contribution to the intergovernmental negotiations in lead up to the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit which took place in New York in September where the new set of development goals was unveiled. The Secretary General Synthesis Report is titled “The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming Lives and Protecting the Planet” (Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, 2014).

In June 2015 the Zero Draft of the Outcome Document of the Post-2015 Development Agenda “Transforming Our World by 2030” was released and discussed at the post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations at the end of June. The document provided the main framework for the adoption of Agenda 2030 at the UN Summit in September (AWID, 2015; Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, 2015). “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the document establishing the 2030 Agenda, was signed by the world’s Heads of State and Government at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York at the end of September 2015.

The International Council for Science (ISCU) in partnership with the International Social Science Council (ISSC) published a review of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets early in 2015. The review commends the Open Working Group on the SDGs for proposing a set of goals that vastly improve on the MDGs, and that address important systemic barriers to sustainable development such as inequality, unsustainable consumption patterns, weak institutional capacity, and environmental degradation, which were all neglected by the MDGs (ISCU and ISSC, 2015: 5). Nevertheless, the two councils argue that the new development framework would benefit from an overall narrative, or overarching goal, that binds the 17 goals

together and articulates how the goals will be implemented; how the pursuit of specific goals will lead to broader outcomes of social change; as well as how this change will take place. Without this clarification, neither the ultimate end of the SDGs in combination is clear, nor is how the proposed goals and targets would contribute to achieve the ultimate end (ISCU and ISSC, 2015: 8). Furthermore the interlinkages between the different goals and targets are not made clear. It is evident that goal areas overlap and that many targets may contribute to several goals, and that some goals may conflict. This suggests that the framework as a whole is not internally consistent, which could as a result imply that it is not sustainable (ISCU and ISSC, 2015: 9).

With regards to the stand-alone goal on women's empowerment and gender equality, the ISCU and ISSC applaud the targets for addressing the root causes of women's and girls' inequality, but argue that the targets lack outcome statements that will lead to transformation both at the individual and institutional social-political level. The councils further argue that very important economic and social targets are missing with regards to women's engagement in wage work; the need for equal access to education; as well as women and children's mental and physical health beyond that of reproduction (ISCU and ISSC, 2015: 31). Furthermore, the review highlights that gendered inequalities are the most pervasive of all inequalities, and therefore there are strong interlinkages between Goal 5 and the other SDGs. It was thus suggested that wording is added to all other goals to recognise that without attention to women and to gendered inequalities, sustainable change is unlikely (ISCU and ISSC, 2015: 33). The next section will elaborate on the critiques and suggestions various women's and human rights' organisations have voiced on the post-2015 development agenda.

2.5. A Gendered Critique of Agenda 2030

As described above, the HLP Report, which appeared in May 2013, provided the first comprehensive outline of how the UN, after a series of consultations, envisioned the post-2015 development agenda. Even though the HLP Report also offered a list of twelve provisional goals, the Open Working Group's suggestion of 17 goals built on the weaknesses and shortcomings of the HLP Report by taking into account the critiques voiced by various stakeholders. Nevertheless, women's organisations have continued to express their discontent on a variety of issues pertaining to the development agenda, especially with regard to the HLP Report and the Secretary General's Synthesis Report that appeared at the end of 2014. The following section will review these critiques.

Even though heavy critiques emanated from international women's organisations after the release of the HLP Report, some of these critiques have been recognised, and suggestions and recommendations by these organisations have been incorporated into the more recent set of SDGs and targets presented by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals in June 2014. Even though women's organisations welcomed the separate goal on women's empowerment and gender equality from the start, there were various issues on which they voiced their critiques, which have hitherto been corrected (even if not to a desired level). These include addressing the growing inequalities within and between states (see goal 10) and specifically between men and women (see goal 5); addressing accountability mechanisms and financing (see goal 17 and targets 10.4, 10.b, 10.c); and recognising the burden of women's unpaid labour, in the form of reproductive and care work (see target 5.4). The majority of the concerns raised by women's organisations with regards to the gender dimensions of the goals, however, still remain unaddressed.

The Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL, 2013) argues that the HLP Report (in addition to not addressing the inequalities within and between states, as well as men and women, which the new proposal on the SDGs does) does not address the root causes of poverty, including the feminisation and intergenerational transfer of poverty. Furthermore, the Report does not take into account people who are discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Lastly, the report does not acknowledge the large body of literature that suggests that neo-liberal economic policies widen inequality and increase human rights violations, especially for women. The CWGL (2013) argues that the post-2015 development agenda has allowed economic interests to supersede the greater aim of respecting human rights and sustainable development. Profits have therefore taken precedence over people (CWGL, 2013). The Development Alternative with Women in a New Era (DAWN, 2013) agrees by arguing that women's rights are only regarded as relevant when they have the ability to bring about economic growth.

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID, 2013) agrees with the CWGL by also claiming that the HLP Report places the importance of business and economic growth above that of people and human rights. This is further emphasised by AWID's (2013) assertion that the report ignores many of the recommendations made by affected individuals and communities. Poku and Whitman (2011: 192) argue that the MDGs have from the start been criticised for placing too much emphasis on donor states, international organisations and other powerful actors, discounting the agency of the poor themselves. It would seem as though this

trend has survived the transition to the post-2015 development agenda. It is for this reason that Porter and Khumalo (2013) inquire why African institutions should buy into another global framework that holds them accountable to international organisations as opposed to African citizens.

DAWN (2013) further argues that the instrumental use of women's rights in the HLP Report still follows the outdated recipe of gender mainstreaming, namely "add women, and stir". This method has shown to be uncondusive to achieving equality amongst all gender identities and sexual orientations. DAWN argues that if gender equality and social justice are to be achieved in an effective and universal manner, the rights of intersex people and people with non-heteronormative sexual orientations and gender identities need to be fulfilled. Specific attention should also be paid to the violence and discrimination faced by sex workers, sex-trafficked victims, women working in conflict and militarised zones, and women human rights defenders, none of which are addressed in the HLP Report (DAWN, 2013). DAWN and UN WOMEN (2012) add that the Report should also place emphasis on the rights of women infected with HIV/AIDS, women with disabilities, female drug users, and female migrants.

The CWGL (2013) further highlights an important concern, namely that critical inter-linkages between the 17 goals, specifically in relation to women, are absent. The targets related to climate change, energy, agriculture, water and food security need to pronounce the inter-linkages between women's access to and control over national resources, and their role in sustainable energy solutions and capacity building. There are also no links between women's empowerment and ensuring stable and peaceful societies (CWGL, 2013). If these inter-linkages and the critical role of women in aiding the development project are not recognised, it is bound to result in failure once more.

AWID (2013) agrees, by claiming that women's rights and gender equality advocates are generally concerned about the lack of an integrated gender perspective throughout the report. The organisation argues that the report is unable to identify the link between the multiple levels of discrimination girls and women face, and their greater experiences of poverty, deprivation and marginalisation (AWID, 2013). The report does also not fully recognise that women make up the majority of the world's poor or the majority of the world's most vulnerable workers. Furthermore, it fails to acknowledge that women, especially those that are subsistence farmers, are disproportionally affected by climate change and environmental disasters, for which they are the least responsible (AWID, 2013).

The Secretary General's Synthesis Report that was released in December 2014 once more gained the attention of international women's organisations and coalitions that released various documents to critique the report. ROFAF (2014), a network of women's organisations in francophone Africa, argues that the Synthesis Report fails to explain how it will ensure that the world's population will benefit from the agenda when it is implemented, or how the post-2015 development agenda will improve the conditions of the most vulnerable social groups including women who barely experience the direct impacts of development policies in their everyday life. ROFAF (2014) further argues that the Secretary General failed to mention how the gender gaps imparted by the MDGs will be closed by the new agenda. Overall, the women's network regards the report as lacking ambition and innovation.

The Post-2015 Human Rights Caucus (2015) agrees that the Synthesis Report does not stipulate how the aspirations it sets out will be operationalised, or how it will guarantee the respect of human rights principles. The caucus further argues that the report does not place enough emphasis on the detrimental effects of current dominant macroeconomic and fiscal policies that undermine human rights and economic, gender, and environmental justice. In addition, the report does not effectively underscore the absolute necessity to eliminate all forms of gender inequality and to guarantee women's and girl's rights. The report fails to recognise that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental structural components to sustainable development, as well as human rights priorities in their own rights and therefore instrumental to economic prosperity. Other issues relating to gender equality that are either absent or not addressed explicitly enough, are: "sexual rights, ending violence against women, redistributing unpaid care work, discrimination against LGBTIQ persons, and comprehensive sexuality education" (Post-2015 Human Rights Caucus, 2015).

The Women's Major Group (2014) also adds a host of critiques and suggestions on the Secretary General's Synthesis Report. The group argues that as a result of the Secretary General's reference to this century as the "century of women" (para 51), all stakeholders in the new agenda will need a guiding document that consistently and clearly prioritises and mainstreams gender equality and the realisation of women's and girl's human rights across the agenda and all proposed solutions. The Group contends that it is not sufficient for the agenda only to "include" women, but that it should be truly transformative by coming up with strategies that focus on increasing women's and girl's agency and autonomy so as to not only end discrimination and violence against women but also to guarantee gender justice and long term sustainable development. Other issues that have been omitted from the agenda include not making reference

to the negative effects of inheritance, succession, customary and/or family laws and marriage-related practices on women's right to land, as well as the need to eliminate female genital mutilation and other harmful practices. Furthermore, the Women's Major Group (2014) argues that the report fails to take into account the structural and underlying causes and social norms that influence and perpetuate gender inequality, which therefore makes it difficult to see how the isolated initiatives it proposes can succeed in delivering a truly gender-transformative agenda that is essential in preventing that half of humanity does not continue to be held back (Women's Major Group 2014).

By not recognising these important gender inter-linkages, Agenda 2030 makes the same mistake the MDGs did, namely not acknowledging that gender equality is not just an objective in itself but that it is essential to achieving all of the development goals (AWID, 2012). Taking this into consideration, the framework continues to represent women as vulnerable victims rather than agents of change and therefore fails to address one of the root causes of under-development (AWID, 2012).

2.6. Gender Equality in South Africa

Even though South Africa has a proud history of women's activism, especially in the fight against apartheid, gendered activism has always played a secondary role in the nationalist-political aims of the ANC (O'Manique & Fourie, 2016: 109). Up until 1990, the ANC leadership did not recognise women's emancipation as an autonomous aspect of national liberation. The anti-apartheid struggle was dependent on a joint effort between the sexes in the battle against a system that exploited and oppressed both men and women on the basis their colour. Members of the ANC executive claimed that a "separationist feminist liberation" would divert attention from nationalistic aims (Geisler, 2004: 67). Even though there was a real and serious attempt to incorporate women into the political programme of the national liberation movement, women were relegated to traditional mothering and caring roles and served the main purpose of recruiting other women into the liberation movement (Hassim, 2014b: 69).

As apartheid was coming to an end in the early 1990s, the ANC Women's League led the movement to champion women's rights. This led to the introduction of new laws which outlawed discrimination. Marital rape was recognised and criminalised in 1993, a year in which the first legal protections against domestic violence were also introduced. To strengthen sexual and reproductive health rights, a very liberal abortion act was passed, contraception was made freely available, user fees were removed from maternity services, sexual harassment was

outlawed, and rights to maternity leave mandated. The Government also ratified and championed various international commitments of gender equality, and a newly introduced quota system reserved 30 per cent of parliamentary seats for women. Various offices were also created to mainstream gender equality and create the bureaucratic machinery to convert policy into law and vice versa (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012: 16).

Based on the country's strong legal framework that robustly defends gender equality and women's rights, a 2013 World Economic Forum report on global gender disparities ranked South Africa 17th out of 136 countries. South Africa scored 0.751 on a scale where 0.0 measures total inequality and 1.0 measures total equality. The country ranked particularly high with regards to educational attainment, specifically enrolment in secondary education; health and survival; as well as political empowerment, ranking 8th with regards to the ratio of women in parliament (World Economic Forum, 2013: 338-339).

Despite these optimistic statistics, patriarchy continues to infuse every aspect of South African society. On the ground discriminatory practices, social norms, and persistent stereotypes more often than not shape inequitable access to opportunities, resources, and power for women and girls (StatsSA, 2011: vi). O'Manique and Fourie (2016: 107) consequently argue that "South Africa remains at best socially traditionalist, or at worst normatively and culturally misogynistic, and nowhere more so than in the private sphere, which remains ignored". The policies that have been the hardest to change relate to challenges to traditional authority and customary law, especially regarding land and inheritance. In recent years, more so under Jacob Zuma's administration, patriarchal dominance in traditional and rural areas has been strengthened by protecting male control over land. Since 2009 a series of laws were passed by Parliament, granting traditional leaders increased authority. These include the Traditional Governance Framework Act, the Communal Land Rights Act, and the Traditional Courts Bill (O'Manique & Fourie, 2016: 108).

Gouws (2013: 42) argues that codified customary law reinforces patriarchal norms, bestows superior status and authority on senior men, and creates a more rigid division between the public and private spheres. Under customary law, men are granted property-holding capacity, which places women outside the law and treats them as minors. Given that the agency of women is tied to male family members (land owners) this has resulted in the maldistribution of benefits for women (Gouws, 2013: 46). Under customary law in South Africa women cannot actively engage in, or be present where, negotiations over land take place. This has often resulted in unmarried women, widows, and divorcees losing their and their children's livelihoods.

Gouws (2013: 35) further argues that culture and tradition have often been invoked to justify patriarchal and sexist practices even though these practices deliberately violate gender equality and women's rights. From the onset of the anti-apartheid struggle, continuing to the present, there has been no deliberate effort on behalf of the ANC to "gender-conscientise" its members. As a result sex pests and even rape have come to be tolerated by the ruling party, no better illustrated than through the ANC and its Women's League's unwavering support for Jacob Zuma during his rape trial in 2006, in which Zuma used arguments based on Zulu culture to justify his opinion that he was entitled to have sex with his accuser (O'Manique & Fourie, 2016: 109; Hassim, 2014a: 178). Many women within the ANC supported Zuma instead of Khwezi (the accuser), some even going as far as holding banners, reading "Zuma, rape me" (Hassim, 2014b: 138).

Morrell, Jewkes and Lindegger (2012: 17) highlight that Jacob Zuma has come to epitomise a form of masculinity, which he has albeit asserted in the name of tradition, that is "heterosexist, patriarchal, implicitly violent, and that glorifie[s] ideas of male sexual entitlement, notably polygamy, and conspicuous sexual success with women". Under this form of masculinity, which has come to dominate especially among the black population of South Africa, the violent assertion of male entitlement to women's bodies is being normalised (Hassim, 2014a: 178). Furthermore arguments around culture and masculinity have been used to justify a range of practices that police women's bodies, including virginity testing, constrictions on the clothes women can wear in public, to 'corrective rape' used a measure to cure black lesbians of their supposedly un-African sexuality (Hassim, 2014a: 179). By supporting Zuma, and not questioning the violent, homophobic and sexist masculinity he is advocating under black men, the ANC and its Women's League has become complicit in a culture that supports sexual violence and abuse (Hassim, 2014b: 151).

In 2010 Gender Links for Equality and Justice, a South African women's organisation, together with the South African Medical Research Council conducted a study that revealed that 75 per cent of South African men have perpetrated violence against women in their lifetime, and more than half of women have been the victims of GBV. The study showed that most of this violence was perpetrated at the hands of intimate partners (Gender Links, 2011). Despite these alarming statistics, GBV is almost completely absent from the South African political agenda (Gender Links, 2011). Even though Government has drafted and introduced several policies and laws since 1994 that aim to reduce and eradicate GBV (e.g. the Domestic Violence Act, the Sexual Offences Act of 2007, and the 365 National Action Plan to End Gender Violence), and ratified

international as well as regional protocols to show its commitment to addressing GBV, in reality this has had little effect (Mofana, 2015).

Notwithstanding continuous protests and calls by South Africa's civil society on government to come up with a national plan of action against GBV, little action has ensued. In his 2013 State of the Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma emphasised that the improvement of the status of women in South Africa was a priority for government. He promised that the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, which seeks *inter alia* to eliminate discrimination and harmful practices, including GBV, would soon become law. This has still not happened and government has further not followed through on its promise to create a National Strategic Plan for GBV (Mofana, 2015).

Government's inaction is alarming, especially given that a recent study by KPMG shows that GBV costs South Africa between R28.4 billion and R42.4 billion a year, or between 0.9 and 1.3 percent of annual GDP (KPMG, 2014: 2). Gouws (2014: 25) highlights that at an individual level, GBV leads to a loss of productivity and income, psychological trauma, decreased investment in human capital as well as increased life insurance costs. On a macro level it affects financial investment into the country as well as social cohesion and economic growth. Furthermore, most abused women lack the economic opportunities to either seek freedom, or redress from justice. Their predicament is augmented by the inefficiency of the state to attend to their needs. The police are incapacitated to deal with GBV, there is a lack of funding for shelters as well as counselling for victims of sexual abuse, and a lack of implementation of victims' empowerment programmes (Gouws, 2014: 23).

At the same time, men who rape, batter and otherwise molest women are rarely punished by the criminal justice system (Onyejekwe, 2004: 35). Firstly, GBV is severely underreported given that victims fear retaliation and victimisation. Secondly, women's experiences of rape are often disqualified. Not only does the justice system regularly presume accused rapists to be innocent; rapists are also regularly made out to be victims of false accusation. This leads to the secondary victimisation of rape survivors in court (Gouws, 2014: 23). Race and class further aggravate secondary victimisation of African women and sex workers. Sex workers' claims of rape are the most severely ridiculed given that they are not considered "rapeable" (Gouws, 2014: 26). Lastly, Gouws (2014: 26) highlights that heteronormative discourses around rape discount the rape of lesbian women even though 'corrective rape' rates in South Africa are very high.

2.7. South Africa's Engagement with the MDGs

With regards to South Africa's implementation of the MDGs, the South African Centre for Gender Equality, a Chapter nine institution that has the responsibility to protect women's rights and gender equality, highlighted several weaknesses with regards to the progress made towards gender equality in terms of each of the eight MDGs. The study showed that women are the main bearers of poverty in South Africa. They make up the majority of the unemployed across all age categories, especially among the youth. Women, if they have the opportunity to enter the job market in the first place, are also heavily discriminated against in the workplace and earn far less than their male counterparts. Patriarchal attitudes also reinforce stereotypical gender roles, meaning that women remain responsible for the majority of reproductive and care work, even when they are employed (Hicks & Segooa, 2011: 13 & Thorpe, 2015b).

Even though South Africa has attained goals two and three in terms of universal primary education, statistics do not take into account the critical distinction between enrolment and attendance, or address the primary reasons why girls drop out of school (Hicks & Segooa, 2011: 14). Furthermore, by only focusing on who is in the classroom, the metric ignores who remains outside – and why. It also pays no attention to the quality of said education or how gender-sensitive that education is (O'Manique & Fourie, 2016: 110).

With regards to goal three, South Africa can once more boast about its high female representation in parliament (42 per cent), yet Government's self-professed success in reaching or even exceeding most gender equality targets has been highly ineffective at addressing the reality of spectacular gender inequality (O'Manique & Fourie, 2016: 110), unparalleled GBV rates, and the continuation of a number of harmful cultural practices such as virginity testing, *ukuthwala* (abduction of bride to be), female genital mutilation, *ukungena* (handing over of widow to her deceased husband's male relative), and under-age *ilobolo* (engagement) (Hicks & Segooa, 2011: 14).

MDG five contained two targets, namely to reduce maternal mortality to 38 maternal deaths per 100 000 births by 2015 and to achieve universal access to reproductive health care. Between 1990 and 2015 the maternal mortality rate in South Africa has only decreased slightly, with the Department of Health estimating that 176 women still die per 100 000 live births, a rate almost five times the level aspired to in goal five. Most of these deaths are determined to have been preventable by the Department of Health (Thorpe, 2015a). Most maternal deaths occur in rural areas mainly due to health systems failures, such as the non-availability of blood and intensive

care facilities, and the lack of appropriately skilled staff and inadequate resources (Hicks & Segooa, 2011: 15). O'Manique and Fourie (2016: 111) highlight that the restriction of MDG five to a single, unproblematised metric does not address the systemic drivers of such a high mortality rate. Furthermore the guarantee of sexual and reproductive health rights in legislative terms does not address the “social reproduction of patriarchal norms, the continued cultural facilitation of backstreet abortions, race and class inequalities, and the deeply gendered nature of the crisis in South Africa’s public health system” (O'Manique & Fourie, 2016: 111).

An overall evaluation of South Africa’s success in meeting the MDGs shows that in metric terms the country has to a large extent achieved the targets outlined by the UN. The Government has unquestioningly embraced these arguably insufficient and spurious metrics and equated its success in their achievement as a satisfactory commitment to gender equality. Nevertheless progress in the achievement of the MDGs is ineffectual at addressing the main obstacles that hamper the realisation of substantive gender equality and justice, such as traditional culture, harmful cultural practices and other manifestations of masculinity and patriarchy. In accommodating gender-blind neoliberal “legalistic/administrative superficialities”, i.e. in having attained equal representation in parliament, in the workplace, on the board, and in the classroom, government has done its job in ticking the gender box and can consequently ignore unabated discrimination and violence in the private domain (O'Manique & Fourie, 2016: 111-112).

Unfortunately there is also little hopeful prospect for the post-2015 development context in South Africa. In 2012 Government released its National Development Plan (NDP), which aims to eliminate poverty and inequality by 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2012: 14). This plan will have to be implemented alongside the SDGs to address various local and global development concerns. Nevertheless South Africa has affirmed that poverty eradication, inequalities and unemployment are some of the priorities that will inform the process of South Africa’s engagement with the post-2015 development agenda. Domestic priorities, as formulated under the NDP, will thus take precedence over other global concerns outlined in the SDGs (Institute for Global Dialogue and Oxfam, 2013: 10). This also suggests that gender inequality and women’s rights abuses will continue unabated.

The NDP has been heavily criticised for not taking into account women’s gendered practical and strategic roles, which will hamper the redistribution of resources and economic growth. Given that the plan, like most neo-liberal development initiatives, is geared towards economic growth, it ignores women’s gender specific contribution to, or needs within, the economy and development. It further makes no reference to women’s contributions to the economy through

unpaid domestic, child-care, and home-based care for the elderly and persons with disabilities. If these activities are not recognised and no measures are put in place to enable women to participate in income-earning activities, women will remain trapped in their situations of poverty. Furthermore the NDP makes no reference to the health system costs associated with GBV, nor does it provide a strategy to address these needs (Agenda Feminist Media, 2013). Chapter 4 will provide a more comprehensive gendered critique of the NDP and make suggestions as to how both the local and global 2030 development agendas can be adapted within the South African context in order to accommodate postcolonial feminist insights on women's development.

2.8. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has shown that women's development studies truly began in 1970 when Ester Boserup published her famous *Women's Economic Role in Development*, a book that highlighted that women did not benefit from development projects and that they therefore had to be deliberately included and incorporated into the development process. This led to the establishment of WID, a strongly liberal framework that focused on incorporating women into the labour market but disregarded the structural causes of women's subordination. In the early 1980s GAD offered an alternative framework that truly sought to break down all structures of gender subordination and that recognised the agency of all women, regardless of their race, class, culture, or colonial history. Unfortunately, the vast majority of local, regional, and global development initiatives have continued to disregard the transformative and integrational power of GAD, and thereby persist to work within the WID framework. This is clearly highlighted by the fact that the MDGs, South Africa's NDP, as well as the post-2015 development agenda fail to address the structural causes of women's subordination; regard women as a homogenous vulnerable group, disregarding their diversity as well as agency; and overlook that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental structural components of sustainable development, and that the gender dimensions of all goals and targets must therefore be made explicit. Should the development community continue to disrespect these gendered impediments to development, little change will ensue in the years leading up to 2030.

Chapter 3 will provide a theoretical framework that further explores the limitations and shortcomings of liberal feminism and the WID framework, and highlights the strengths of GAD and postcolonial feminism in providing a more transformative and sustainable means to achieve extensive and meaningful gender equality, and consequently revolutionary development and change.

CHAPTER 3: A POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF ‘WESTERN FEMINISM’⁴ AND CAPITALIST RACIST PATRIARCHY

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 provided a brief overview of the history and advancement of women’s development and also reviewed the critiques various transnational women’s organisations have voiced on Agenda 2030. The literature review critiqued WID and its associated capitalist/modernist development agenda for favouring economic growth at the expense of social, cultural and human rights concerns; for not addressing the sources and nature of women’s subordination and oppression; for focusing exclusively on the productive aspects of women’s work, thereby ignoring or minimising their reproductive and care roles; for disregarding the impact of global inequities on Third World women, as well as relations of exploitation between women based on intersectionalities of class, race and culture; and for discounting the agency of Third World women, and misrepresenting their diverse local realities. The chapter showed that GAD provides a more transformative and sustainable approach to development by focusing on patriarchy and social inequality instead of production and economic growth; for supporting the breakdown of all structures of gender subordination and the empowerment of women; for recognising that women experience oppression differently in accordance with their race, class, colonial history, culture and position in the international economy; and for recognising women as agents of change instead of passive recipients of development. The gendered critique of Agenda 2030 in Chapter 2 showed that the post-2015 development agenda is still ideologically anchored in the theoretical understandings of WID and that it ignores the valuable contributions of GAD.

The overall purpose of this study is to provide a postcolonial feminist critique of Agenda 2030 and to apply this critique as a basis to make recommendations on how South Africa can improve its current development policies in order to end gender inequality and empower the country’s women. This chapter provides the postcolonial feminist theoretical framework according to which the case study will be analysed in Chapter 4. The two research questions that will guide

⁴ Refers to mainstream liberal feminist theories produced by academia located in the Global North. The use of this term does not however imply that Western feminist discourse and political practice is singular or homogenous in its goals, interests or analysis. What this chapter does however seek to achieve, is to challenge Western liberal feminist scholarship for its universalising and colonising tendencies. It furthermore calls for all feminisms to be historically and geographically grounded and to engage productively with difference (Chambers & Watkins, 2012).

this chapter are: firstly, *what are the limitations of liberal feminism in constructing an all-inclusive development framework that specifically addresses the multiple layers of marginalisation women in South Africa face*, and secondly, *what is the value of postcolonial feminist theory in its application to critique Agenda 2030 and South African development strategies, as well as its utility to provide recommendations on South Africa's future implementation of local and global development frameworks?* This chapter therefore further examines the limitations of Western liberal feminism and WID and explores in what way postcolonial feminist theory and GAD provide a more suitable and encompassing theoretical basis, not only to critique existing development frameworks, but also to create more inclusive and reasoned development agendas. This theoretical framework is then applied in the following chapter to critique Agenda 2030 and its relevance to South Africa's gender and development context.

3.2. Critical Theory: Feminist and Postcolonial Theory

The main goal of this chapter is to explore the dissimilarities between two different strands of feminist theory, specifically in how they approach the subject of development and its inherent relation to women's empowerment. The chapter employs the contributions of postcolonial feminists to critique Western liberal feminism, which continues to be the dominant approach in the formation of global as well as local post-apartheid development policies and frameworks.

First, it is important to consider that feminist as well as postcolonial theory fall under the umbrella of critical theory, which in contrast to positivist theories is normative, meaning that instead of explaining reality, it provides proposals for how the world could and should be improved (Cudd, 2005: 164). Critical theory highlights the social construction of identities as well as the significance of identity in constructing interests and actions. Importantly, critical theory also supports the development of theories that emphasise as well as attempt to dismantle structures of domination (Price & Reus-Smit, 1998: 261). In this context feminist theory has the aim of highlighting forms of gender discrimination, dismantling patriarchal systems and advancing women's rights. In essence, it highlights, critiques, and also endeavours to dismantle the domination of men over women (Jaggar, 1983: 7).

Postcolonial theory on the other hand does so in the context of the domination of the Global North over the Global South. It has the goal of strengthening the position of the Global South within the study of International Relations (IR), which postcolonial theorists argue is dominated by the Anglo-American tradition (Acharya & Buzan, 2007: 292); has to a large extent ignored

the history of colonialism and the developing world; and is largely produced by and for the West (Acharya & Buzan, 2007: 288; Cudd, 2005: 165). Most importantly, postcolonial theory critiques the widespread belief that hegemonic Western IR theory sufficiently and effectively makes sense of world politics and that non-hegemonic theories are thus superfluous and therefore subsequently rejected or ignored (Acharya & Buzan, 2007: 297).

Based on these critiques, postcolonial theory therefore aims to give a voice to those who are marginalised and discriminated against on the basis of their geographical location and colonial history, as well as to grant these marginalised individuals in the Global South the agency they deserve (Acharya & Buzan, 2007: 290 & 291). Furthermore, one of postcolonial theory's principal aims is to de-Westernise or decolonise the discipline of IR (Vasilaki, 2012: 4), by creating IR theory that is more representative and inclusive in terms of what it regards as scientific knowledge (Tickner, 2011: 607). This would mean that the voices and contributions of the dispossessed would have to be acknowledged and accommodated (Tickner, 2011: 617-618).

In combining feminist and postcolonial theory, postcolonial feminism critiques hegemonic feminist theory (that is to say mainstream liberal feminist theory that is produced in the West) for being dominated by the discourses of Western middle-class academia; for ignoring the identities, experiences and agency of Third World women; and for its assumption that the Western feminist theoretical framework is universally applicable, that it adequately represents both the realities and desires of Western and Third world women, and that feminist theories emanating from the Global South therefore have no contribution to make to the discipline.

It is important to note that postcolonial feminism(s) is not a monolithic unified project that assumes and articulates a universal set of epistemological assumptions. Various postcolonial feminisms have developed out of the diverse experiences and realities of women from multiple geographical locations and historical contexts, and have further been informed by various socio-ontologies of gender, sexuality, race and class (Agathangelou & Turcotte, 2010: 50; 58). Moreover, postcolonial feminist theory is employed to study and critique a variety of disciplines within the Humanities and Social Sciences and therefore its contribution to a vast body of knowledge is extensive and highly diverse. This chapter extracts only a few discrete voices from a much larger spectrum of contributions to postcolonial feminist theory.

3.3. Postcolonial Feminism: An Introduction

Chandra Mohanty (1991: 51), one of the most established postcolonial feminists, sees her discipline as one considered with two interlaced projects. One is an internal critique of

hegemonic “Western” feminisms, and two, “the formulation of autonomous, geographically, historically, and culturally grounded” feminist theory. Based on the primacy of these two projects, one can already infer that one of the main critiques of Western feminist theory is that it is not “autonomous, geographically, historically and culturally grounded”, meaning that it does not, given that it studies Third World women at all, take into account their historical and cultural background which is very much rooted in their geographical location.

Agathangelou and Turcotte (2010: 45) argue that a woman’s geographical location determines her relationship and access to rights and state protection. By implication, a Third World woman living in a postcolonial society is granted fewer rights and less state protection than a woman living in the West. Poor women living in developing countries are to a large extent subjected to infrastructurally underdeveloped residential areas, unemployment, housing shortages, and high levels of crime and communal violence. Furthermore, they are frequently exposed to severe measures of domestic and sexual oppression. In these situations the state usually acts as a passive or active preserver of patriarchal control and male domestic violence as seen in the case of South Africa (Sa’ar, 2005: 690). Postcolonial feminists therefore claim that as a result of Western women’s “additional” rights, First World discourses on women’s rights necessitate violence and the victimisation of the “Other” in the Global South who is denied these rights as a consequence of her location and history. The disparity between the accesses to rights as experienced by these two different women therefore lead to further discrimination and marginalisation on behalf of the Third World woman and ultimately also sustains projects of segregation. Agathangelou and Turcotte (2010: 46) argue that it is through this geopolitical segregation, by othering those that do not fit the norm, that the discipline of IR sustains itself.

Based on this geopolitical discrimination and segregation, postcolonial feminism critiques Western feminism’s assumption that the West is the primary subject of theory and praxis and that anything non-Western is therefore regarded as “Other” (Mohanty, 1991: 52). Agathangelou and Turcotte (2010: 49) agree by stating that Western feminism reinforces the political boundaries of academic knowledge by securing “whiteness” and “First Worldism” as structures of privilege within feminist and IR frameworks. Western feminists achieve this by comparing the experiences of women across time, distance and culture. By creating ahistorical conceptualisations of the common experience, exploitation and strength of Third World women or between Third and First World women, Western feminist categories of self and other are normalised and Western feminists’ view of the self is presented as universally valid (Mohanty, 1997: 28). Hirschmann (1999: 29) agrees by arguing that middle class, heterosexual white

women have by theorising their own experiences, albeit with the tendency to speak of women in quasi-universal terms, excluded the experiences and needs of women of colour, women with non-heteronormative sexual orientations, and poor women. This has geographically widened the gap between feminist knowledge production in the North and in the South, which exacerbates the inability to create alliances and solidarity amongst all feminist scholars, which is ultimately one of postcolonial feminism's principal aims (Cudd, 2005: 176).

Parpart (1995: 255) agrees with Mohanty as well Agathangelou and Turcotte by arguing that if Western feminist discourse does not ignore or marginalise Third World women, it presents them as primitive and backward, uniformly poor, powerless and vulnerable. This image is contrasted to that of Western women who are presented as modern, educated and sexually liberated. Not only does this analysis misrepresent the multiple identities and realities of Third World women, but it also lessens the possibility of the formation of partnerships between Western and Third World women.

In view of Western feminism's tendency to other all which is considered non-Western, it is important to recognise that the "Other" is, in this instance, very much defined as an essentialised, unitary object. Western feminism is consequently considered as a form of neo-colonialism in the sense that it implies a relation of structural domination, which according to Mohanty (1991: 52), suppresses "the heterogeneity of the subject(s)" it studies. By colonising the historical and cultural heterogeneity of women in the South, a singular composite Third World woman is constructed that ironically carries the stamp of "Western humanist discourse" (Mohanty, 1991: 53). This assumption that all women form part of a coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, nationality and regionality means that a notion of gender or of sexual difference can be applied universally and cross-culturally (Mohanty, 1991: 55). Postcolonial feminists show that this is certainly not the case.

In contrast to western feminist assumptions, Dube (2001: 214) shows that not all women face the same measure of oppression. She argues that some women may well be the oppressors of other women and even men because they are privileged on the basis of factors other than their gender, such as their class or race. The universal women's experience, which mainstream feminists portray, is therefore not universally applicable. Mirza (2009: 3) argues that racism, social class, sexuality, disability and other systems of oppression, apart from patriarchy, simultaneously determine the relative position and therefore marginalisation of women, which also creates specific as well as varied patterns of inequality and discrimination. Consequently,

postcolonial feminists argue that feminism, as a whole, should highlight the differences that divide women's experience, for example class, race, ethnicity, location, age and religion. By doing so, it will recognise that some women face double or triple oppression because they are not only discriminated against on the basis of their gender but also on the basis of other, perhaps more important, factors (Dube, 2001: 214). Syed and Ali (2011: 357) show that as a consequence of liberal feminism's indifference to the intersectionalities of race, class and sexual oppression, as well as its narrow focus on issues of sex and sexual equality, many Third World women have chosen not to identify with the term 'feminism' because of the racist and narrow implications associated with white feminism.

Grewal (2012: 577) illustrates that problems of racism and neo-colonialism have continued to take precedence over the problem of sexism for Third World women. In their struggle against colonialism, a fight, which could be argued, continues to this day, black women had to fight in solidarity with black men and were not supposed to speak out against their own oppression. Until this day, the significance of upholding culture and tradition and fighting against racism has taken precedence over dismantling gender inequality (Grewal, 2012: 578). Postcolonial feminists also critique Western feminisms' preoccupation with bourgeois conceptions of oppression such as those associated with the home, family and motherhood. Women in the Global South consider economic exploitation and political oppression, as well as the fulfilment of basic needs much more important than issues of sexual politics and gender oppression which fascinate middle-class feminists in the North (McEwan, 2001: 98). Brenner (2003: 27; 29) argues that collective and social rights are of far greater significance to Third World women than individual political and civil rights, even though these social rights and other political interests of working class women and women of colour are increasingly being violated and marginalised through the shrinking of public services as part of neoliberal capitalism, a subject which will be explored in greater depth in the next section.

Given these critiques, postcolonial feminism's aim is to define and recognise the Global South not just through its oppression, but more importantly in terms of its historical complexities and the many struggles it fought to overcome this oppression (Mohanty, 2003: 501). The discipline also aims to create a non-colonising solidarity between feminists of different locations, so that they can ultimately agree on the same frame of reference and on what counts as difference (Mohanty, 2003: 502). Moreover, postcolonial feminism seeks to create an intellectual space for Third World and immigrant women to write and theorise about their own experiences so that the "material complexity, reality and agency of Third World women's bodies and lives" can be

restored (Mohanty, 2003: 510). In McEwan's (2001: 95) words, postcolonial feminism "attempts to recover the historical and contemporary voices of the marginalised, the oppressed and the dominated, through a radical reconstruction of history and knowledge production".

3.4. Postcolonial Feminism on Development

Having defined postcolonial feminism's main critiques of Western feminism and the theory's own principal aims, the following section will explore how various and discrete postcolonial feminisms theorise development and critique it on the basis of the gendered power relations it, together with economic neoliberalism, has created. It focuses on five interrelated factors: power relations between the Global North and South; development's disregard for a) women's agency and b) local knowledges; the gendered political economy of globalisation; and finally gender mainstreaming. These critiques and analyses will be employed in Chapter Four to critique Agenda 2030 and to make recommendations on how they can inform South Africa's engagement with the SDGs.

3.4.1. Development and Power

According to Cheryl McEwan (2001: 93) "development is about power". She argues that relations of power are inherent to the operations, locations and unequal distribution of development and that it is therefore essential that contemporary development studies analyse the significance of power. Postcolonial feminism does this by critiquing development on the basis of the unequal relationship it creates between the developed North and the developing South. Postcolonial feminists argue that development is a continuation of European imperialism because it is largely entrenched in European cultures and espouses a hegemonic Western world-view. Cudd (2005: 172) defines Eurocentrism as an attempt "to impose aesthetic and cultural norms on other cultures, ignoring the desires, beliefs, or social structures of the colonised and assuming that the customs and structures of the invader or coloniser are best". Based on this definition, contemporary development policies can be regarded as a continuation of Eurocentrism and imperialism given that they are oblivious to the values, principles and practices of other non-Western cultures, and given that the North is portrayed as modern and superior, whereas the South is depicted as ahistorical, backward and primitive (McEwan, 2001: 94). The peoples of the South can therefore be objectified as helpless victims requiring protection, which consequently justifies Western development policies aimed at uplifting the poor (Jackson, 1997: 147 & 148). Cudd (2005: 165) argues that the humanistic impulse to intervene or rescue Third World women from local forms of 'cultural oppression' is just another

form of colonialism given that it implies a sense of superiority. Furthermore, the imposition of Western notions of proper economic and political development without regard for cultural specificities and nuances is harmful (Cudd, 2005: 172).

Koczberski (1998: 400) argues that the development community tends to regard Third World women as unproductive, economically inactive, house-bound, tradition-bound, and lacking skills, which is contrasted by the portrayal of the skilled, confident and modern Western woman. This stereotypical image of Third World women as powerless, ignorant, and trapped in inferior roles has legitimised an approach that views Third World women in need of help and with little to contribute to development planning (Koczberski, 1998: 401). This has reinforced the belief that Western nations are experts at solving the problems of Third World women and that the latter therefore need only play a secondary role in this framework (Koczberski, 1998: 405).

Koczberski (1998: 404) shows that liberal development theory, specifically WID, has firmly restricted Third World Women to participate in the development process and to have control over the design and management of their own projects. WID has mainly sought to incorporate women into the development process despite the failed acknowledgement of the specific and cultural contexts of women's lives as well as the social and political impacts of economic growth (Koczberski, 1998: 397). With the main aim on integrating women into the development process, development agencies assume that women are not already participating in development, thereby concealing and devaluing their existing roles in the informal economy and in household production. This implies that in order to achieve self-advancement, women have to move from the "traditional" to the "modern" sector (Koczberski, 1998: 399).

3.4.2. Agency, Empowerment and Freedom

Instead of presenting the peoples of the Global South as powerless, passive victims, McEwan (2001: 96) argues that development agendas should rather hear the voices, respect the agencies and incorporate the ideas of those they aim to affect. Abu-Lughod (2001: 783) adds that global development agendas should not seek to 'save' the helpless victims of the Global South by having Western priorities and interests shape the development process. Postcolonial feminists would argue that this inevitably implies a sense of superiority and necessitates violence. Instead, development strategies should anticipate working with local populations, allowing their priorities to set the agenda (Abu-Lughod, 2001: 783; McEwan, 2001: 96). This would require that development recognise and enlarge individual agency.

Chandler (2013: 4) highlights that human agency (i.e. the empowerment and freedom of the individual) has come to play an increasingly important role in development discourse. He argues that development should go beyond the provision of basic needs by creating “a *conducive environment* for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests” (Chandler, 2013: 4; 5). He argues that development should endeavour to enlarge individual agency, which he understands as the individual’s choice-making capacity, by removing various types of unfreedoms that prevent people from exercising their reasoned agency (Chandler, 2013:15). According to him, individuals should be granted an adequate opportunity to reason about what they really want and be able to choose freely what is in their and their society’s best interest. He argues that an individual cannot be considered free, if s/he lacks the capacity for adequate choice making (Chandler, 2013: 19).

Considering the aim of ending gender injustice, development frameworks should specifically recognise women’s and girls’ roles as agents of change; that they are not, in fact, intrinsically vulnerable, but that they are rather disadvantaged by unequal patriarchal structures of power which act as unfreedoms, preventing them from exercising their agency. In order to ensure and enlarge women’s agency it is essential that focus be not only directed at the immediate problems women and girls face, but more importantly, that patriarchal structures of power are challenged and transformed (Stuart & Woodroffe, 2016: 76). Stuart and Woodroffe (2016: 76) argue that women’s collective action is essential to achieve this form of transformative change.

Sardenberg (2008: 19) critiques liberal feminism for failing to establish the link between individual agency, collective action, and structural transformation and how these three jointly contribute to women’s empowerment and the eradication of patriarchy. She argues that true empowerment can only be achieved when patriarchal power structures are challenged and transformed. According to her the liberal conception of empowerment removes ‘power’ from the equation by viewing women’s empowerment as only an instrument for development priorities such as poverty eradication or democracy building, and not as the transformation of the self and the collective as a means to dismantle patriarchy. Governments, development agencies, banks, and NGOs have adopted the term ‘empowerment’ primarily as an instrument to legitimise continued policies and practices that from a feminist perspective do little to empower women (Sardenberg, 2008: 19, 21). It thus gives no space for changes in the existing power relations or in the structures that are responsible for exclusion, poverty and disempowerment in the first place (Sardenberg, 2008: 22). Therefore given liberal theory’s concentration on the

individual, liberal feminism disregards the importance of political organisation, mobilisation and collective action to challenge the status quo and engender transformative changes. Development agendas anchored in liberal feminism have consequently failed at ending gender injustice.

Individual freedom, a concept closely linked to agency and empowerment, is another fundamental priority espoused by postcolonial feminism. Abu-Lughod (2001: 786) argues that development should acknowledge that humans are social beings, always raised in certain social and historical contexts and belonging to specific communities that shape their desires and understandings of the world. It should therefore be recognised that women originating from different contexts and backgrounds might want different things than development would want for them. Even though development has the aim of advancing justice for women, women in the South might conceive justice as something different to the Western conception and therefore envision a different future from the one development sees best for them (Abu-Lughod, 2001: 787-788). It is consequently also fair to question whether concepts such as emancipation, equality, and rights can be employed in a universal manner, signifying that this is what every individual wants and strives towards. Abu-Lughod (2001: 790) argues that instead of trying to save these “helpless victims” and attempting to determine what is best for them in an ahistorical and acultural manner, development should consider how it could create a world in which Third World women can live safe and decent lives, according to how they themselves define a good life (Abu-Lughod, 2001: 789). In other words, women should be afforded the freedom and agency to determine their own futures.

On the other hand, development policies should not follow the example of cultural relativism, which argues that it is not the business of others to judge or interfere in the culture of another, but only to try to understand (Abu-Lughod, 2001: 786; Briggs & Sharp, 2004: 671). Therefore postcolonial feminists do not argue that traditional cultural practices that are physically and emotionally harmful to women should not be critiqued and prohibited. Burman (1995: 24) argues that development should work towards the abolition of traditional practices such as female circumcision and genital mutilation, infanticide and preferential treatment of boys, child marriage as well as honour killings.

3.4.3. Indigenous Knowledge

Despite postcolonial feminist voices calling for development to respect individual agency and to allow the interests and priorities of local populations to set the agenda, development policies are still largely created on a global level and therefore mainly reflect the hegemonic ideologies and

interests of the West and its conception of what is best for those that it believes do not have the ability to improve their own fate (Burman, 1995: 21). The developing world is thus expected to conform to the model that brought about the economic ascendance of the developed world, despite the negative consequences this has shown to have. Under this model, in Escobar's (1995: 111) words, "the local level must reproduce the world as the top sees fit", meaning that the South is expected to catch up with the development of the North by replicating the supposed teleological path to Enlightenment and civilisation that brought economic and social progress to the West (Chandler, 2013: 14). Burman (1995: 31) terms this the "globalisation of development", which ironically reinforces the power relations between the North and the South as expressed through what she calls "cultural and political imperialism".

Peterson (2005: 9) highlights that modernism privileges Western-centric knowledge production and its accompanying political-economic practices, ultimately representing the West as 'superior'. Concurrently, the experiences, knowledges and voices of 'Others' are disregarded and devalorised. Briggs and Sharp (2004: 661) show that as a consequence of the failure of top-down development policies, there has been a recent spark of interest in the possibilities of drawing upon the local knowledges of those communities affected by development projects, in an attempt to produce more effective development strategies. Nevertheless, theorists and development institutions have only to a very limited extent been influenced by indigenous knowledges in the formulation of development policy, failing to engage with alternative ways of perceiving development and thereby missing the opportunity of developing more challenging alternatives (Briggs & Sharp, 2004: 661). Rather, development practitioners have continued to view Western science, knowledge and rationality as more advanced and refined than other positions and therefore maintain that development can only be achieved by bringing locals in line with what the West conceives as the "universal knowledge of scientific truths" (Briggs & Sharp, 2004: 662). Local people are thus rarely consulted about their needs, priorities or local knowledges, let alone allowed to set the agenda.

Spivak (1988) also shows that despite claims to be interested in others, the West is only interested in hearing its own voice and therefore questions the extent to which Western academics and experts really want to engage with people elsewhere; an engagement which would require them to decentre themselves as experts. She further shows that, even if the subaltern were to be granted an opportunity to express her own views, she would not be able to express her true self given that in order to be heard, or to be taken seriously, she would have to adopt the language of science, development or philosophy, which is dominated by Western

concepts and Western languages. Briggs and Sharp (2004: 665) agree by arguing that contemporary development only allows indigenous knowledge to offer solutions under the condition that it reaffirms the current scientific world-view and does not challenge the latter's content, structure or value system. Local knowledge should therefore not offer too a great a challenge to the established order. "[I]t should complement, rather than compete with global knowledge systems" and is therefore not allowed to offer a fundamental challenge to development, but merely provided an opportunity to offer a few technical solutions, place-specific tweakings, and so on (Briggs & Sharp, 2004: 667). As a consequence development has not achieved its aim of drawing all states into the realm of development. Instead, poverty has increased and inequalities within and between nations have widened (Briggs & Sharp, 2004: 662).

3.4.4. Gendered political economy of globalisation

The Western conception of development is intrinsically linked with what Griffin (2010: 220) calls 'neo-liberal globalism', meaning the "'opening up' of national economies to increased monetary flows, foreign investment and transnational actors". Neo-liberalism is further based on four key principles: firstly, marketisation (namely a belief that the market should act as the primary mechanism through which societies distribute their resources), secondly privatisation (a commitment to the use of private finance (rather than public spending) in public projects), deregulation (the removal of trade tariff barriers and subsidies to ensure that capital is granted optimal mobility and the market is freed from unnecessary state intervention), as well as flexibilisation (ensuring that economic production is organised as dynamically and flexibly as possible) (Griffin, 2010: 220).

Neoliberal economic policies instituted by the World Bank and the IMF since the 1970s have however shown to have detrimental effects on the poor, especially women, living in the Global South. Griffin (2010: 220) argues that the (post-)Washington Consensus has failed to address the social and economic aspects of development and has also severely worsened social inequalities in and among states. Peterson (2005: 507) suggests that capitalism is inherently sexist and racist. She shows that economically, ethnically and racially privileged men continue to dominate institutions of authority worldwide. This also implies that economic theorising and policy-making continues to be dominated by masculine ways of thinking, meaning that it is over-reliant on growth and quantifiable indicators instead of focusing on human wellbeing and sustainability (Peterson, 2005: 507).

Furthermore, a masculinist and modernist bias in the political economy both culturally and economically devalues all which is considered feminine (feminised bodies, identities and activities). These feminised ‘others’ include: migrants, marginalised populations, ‘unskilled workers’, the urban underclass and developing countries. Women together with feminised ‘others’ make up the majority of the world’s population, as well as the vast majority of poor, less skilled, insecure, informalised and flexibilised workers; and the global economy absolutely depends on the work that they do. Nevertheless, their work is “variously unpaid, underpaid, trivialised, denigrated, obscured and uncounted” (Peterson, 2005: 508).

The productive economy

Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez (2016: 89) show that even though neoliberal development policies have led to a drastic increase in women’s labour participation, women’s integration into economic life can be conflated with increasing gender-based discrimination and segregation in labour markets, both horizontally and vertically. Women are over-represented in low-paid and poor quality jobs and underrepresented in senior positions. Unemployment rates are also higher among women and they face higher risks of vulnerable employment. Women are further concentrated in unstable and low-paid jobs, notably as manufacturers in export processing zones and as informal and home-based subcontractors (Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 89). These jobs are often not regulated by labour laws and social protection and are therefore highly exploitative (Pearson, 2007: 202). Peterson (2005: 509) argues that the current economic order favours workers who are perceived to be undemanding (unorganised), docile but reliable, available for part-time and temporary work, and willing to accept low wages. Gender stereotypes depict women as especially suitable for these jobs and gender inequalities render women especially desperate for access to income (Peterson, 2005: 509).

Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez (2016: 87) show that the costs of austerity measures, privatisation of government assets and services, cuts in public expenditure, welfare policies and social protection, and in social services and infrastructure continue to be borne by women given that they are more likely to depend on secure government jobs and public resources in support of reproductive labour (Peterson, 2005: 510). Unregulated financial speculation has also led to a loss in women’s secure jobs and earning capacity, lengthened work hours for women as they cushion the impact of household income, as well as an increase in women’s informal and illicit activities (Peterson, 2005: 514).

The reproductive economy

Neoliberal development policies have promoted economic growth in the belief that growth automatically translates into the creation of decent jobs, as well as societal progress. They however rarely recognise that the unequal division of labour described above, as well as the systemic role of unpaid and care work are essential to achieve economic growth (Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 87). Given that a masculinist bias reinforces the assumption that ‘formal economy’ contributions are the only contributions worth measuring, it has resulted in neoliberalism’s neglect of the reproductive economy (Griffin, 2010: 100). Under the current global political economic system, the public sphere of power (i.e. formal paid work) is valorised/masculinised whereas the private sphere (i.e. unpaid reproductive and care work) is marginalised/feminised. When public provisioning and household resources decline, masculinist ideologies look towards women as those responsible for family survival, in spite of fewer available resources, more demands on their time and minimal increases in men’s caring labour. This has resulted in women facing a double burden, the feminisation of poverty worldwide, as well as deterioration in female health and human capital development (Peterson, 2005: 510).

Peterson (2005: 511) shows that as a consequence of worsening conditions in the formal economy, women around the world are spending increasing amounts of time on reproductive labour in providing food and health care, and emotional support for the family, as well as in taking care of young, ill and elderly dependents. Ravazi (2016: 31) shows that even though this work is not monetarily compensated does not imply that it carries no costs. Women, being the primary care-givers, also bear the opportunity costs of the provision of unpaid care work, forgoing the paid work opportunities, enrolment in education and training, or simply to have more time for leisure and self-care. Mothers often neglect their own health in favour of serving family needs and girls (more often than boys) forfeit their education when labour is needed in the household. Ravazi (2016: 31) thus argues that states should provide policy measures that can reduce the drudgery of unpaid domestic and care work through investments in infrastructure, and the formal redistribution of reproductive work between women and men and between families and society. Public revenues should also be used to fund accessible and quality care services, universal family benefits, etc. (Ravazi, 2016: 31).

3.4.5. Gender mainstreaming

Another aspect of development that postcolonial feminism critiques relates to gender mainstreaming (GM) and its failure in achieving meaningful advances in gender equality

(Joseph, Gouws & Parpart, 2011: 8). International development agencies, including the UN have adopted GM as their main approach to advance women's and gender issues in development. Woodford-Berger (2007: 122) defines GM as a mechanism aimed at countering "gender neutral development planning" and at "imbu[ing] all systems, structures and institutional[s]ed cultures with awareness of gender-based biases and injustices, and to remove them". It therefore seeks to produce transformational processes and practices that will concern, benefit and engage women and men equally by systematically integrating explicit attention to issues of sex and gender into all aspects of an organisation's work (Woodford-Berger, 2007: 124).

At the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action national machineries were created that were to ensure that GM took place in all spheres of society (Woodford-Berger, 2007: 122). Developing countries regarded GM as a more radical strategy to ensure gender equality by involving women in the development of policies and projects instead of the earlier focus of WID which was simply on adding women to development projects and creating women-specific policies (Joseph, Gouws & Parpart, 2011: 10)

At the conception of the MDGs in 2000 only one of the eight goals, namely the goal on gender equality and women's empowerment, was gender sensitive (the same can be said about the SDGs). Gender specialists were consequently required to mainstream gender into each of the remaining seven goals (Marchand, 2009: 925). This has resulted in the reduction of gender equity into quantifiable measures and has not achieved much in terms of women's empowerment and gender equality. Joseph, Gouws and Parpart (2011: 8) agree that GM depoliticises concepts such as substantive gender equality, sexism and masculinism, which hamper the effective implementation of GM. The focus of GM is on bringing women into the mainstream masculine world instead of challenging gender hierarchies within society and in policies. The political context in which GM is implemented is thus predominantly disregarded (Joseph, Gouws & Parpart, 2011: 9; 10). As a consequence GM is not sufficiently transformative and has proven unsuccessful in promoting gender equality (Hannan, 2011: 58)

GM as a whole has failed largely as a consequence of its weak implementation by bureaucrats that have a limited understanding of gender. Woodford-Berger (2007: 123) argues that GM demands too little commitment, analytical skill and resources from those that are expected to carry it out. Many bureaucrats regard GM as an end in itself instead of a means to the wider goal of gender equality. In many such instances GM has become a technocratic process focused on ticking off boxes on checklists in order to prove that gender concerns have been integrated into policies (Joseph, Gouws & Parpart, 2011: 10). This however depoliticises feminist activism by

removing gender issues from national and organisational agendas based on the assumption that because gender is being mainstreamed, specific funds and programmes that focus on women only have become superfluous (Joseph, Gouws & Parpart, 2011: 11). This severely hampers the achievement of substantive gender equality and women's empowerment.

Woodford-Berger (2007: 123) further argues that gender mainstreaming has not advanced the situation of most poor women, especially those that find themselves in subaltern structural positions due to their race, ethnicity, class, cultural and historical background and sexual orientation. Gender mainstreaming makes the mistake of essentialising both women and men to one homogenous group. Differences based on ethnicity and class for example, as well as differences of being, power and privilege among women are therefore not addressed (Woodford-Berger, 2007: 130). This has made it difficult for gender mainstreaming to address cross-sexual alliances, relations across different gender identities and nonheteronormative sexual identities (Woodford-Berger, 2007: 132).

Postcolonial feminists emphasise that the design, implementation and evaluation of development policies that are aimed at empowering women should recognise the importance of material and cultural differences between and amongst men and women. They also argue that mainstreaming should be informed by dialogue with civil society and gender activists who have valuable experience concerning the fight against gender oppression and discrimination. Gender mainstreaming should therefore take the form of a participatory approach (True, 2010: 193). This would prevent the possibility of the instrumentalisation of women through policies, meaning that they represent the objects or means to an organisational end which could be seen as the legitimisation of international norms such as liberal democracy, humanitarian intervention, free trade, regional integration and so forth (True, 2010: 194 & 195).

3.5. The Utility of Postcolonial Feminism in Critiquing Liberal Development Agendas

This study argues that postcolonial feminism is of particular value to critique global development agendas given that up to the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 the majority of global frameworks have been formulated by Western development practitioners with very little consultation with affected member-states, civil society groups or local individuals they are aimed at affecting. As a result, development theorists and institutions have only to a limited extent been influenced by indigenous knowledges and local needs and priorities in the formulation of policy. By not allowing locals to influence or set the agenda – instead presenting them as helpless victims requiring protection – North-South development

strategies such as the MDGs have failed to engage with alternative ways of perceiving development and have therefore missed the opportunity of developing more challenging alternatives. By reinforcing power divisions, top-down development strategies have further exacerbated the inability to create alliances and solidarity between the Global North and the South, as well as between Western and Third World women, which will prove essential in challenging and transforming structures of power and eradicating all forms of inequalities.

In response to the above-mentioned critiques, postcolonial feminism advocates that development policies should hear the voices, respect the agencies, and draw on the knowledges of those they aim to affect in order to be more effective at achieving their aims. Postcolonial feminist scholars argue that development should not only aim to decrease poverty by seeking to meet basic needs, but that it should create a conducive environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential by enlarging their choice-making capacity. Development projects should thus grant individuals the opportunity to independently reason about what they really want and allow them to choose freely what is in their and their society's best interest. Ultimately, the subjects whose lives development policies aim at improving should be given a reasonable chance to lead productive and creative lives according to how they define a good life.

Postcolonial feminist scholars further argue that it is of essence, that development recognise women's and girls' roles as agents of change as well as acknowledge the important links between individual agency, collective action and structural transformation. In order for women to exercise their agency freely and in order for them to be empowered, patriarchal structures of power both in the public and private domain need to be challenged and transformed. Women's collective action is essential in achieving this. Postcolonial feminists argue that women's collective action needs to inform gender mainstreaming in order to ensure that substantive gender equality is not depoliticised through quantifiable targets, but that instead gender hierarchies in political, social and economic power structures are challenged and transformed, and that masculine institutions are reformed. Women's rights organisations also need to hold governments accountable for their performance in achieving gender equality and get them to commit to increasing national spending on initiatives that advance women's rights and empowerment (Goetz & Jenkins, 2016: 134).

Another valuable contribution that postcolonial feminism has made to women's development theory is that it recognises that not all women face the same measure of oppression but that gender inequality intersects with multiple and overlapping inequalities based on class, race, sexuality, disability and other systems of oppression. The theory shows that most Third World

women face double or triple oppression because they are not only discriminated against on the basis of their gender but also on the basis of other, perhaps more important factors. Postcolonial feminists would thus recommend that governments and civil society groups implementing development programmes ensure that all women benefit equally from all interventions and that no marginalised group is left behind.

Furthermore, postcolonial feminists recognise that neoliberal globalism disrupts the realisation of human rights and worsens gender inequality. In contrast to liberal feminism, postcolonial feminism not only focuses on the productive aspects of women's work but further recognises that women's unpaid domestic, reproductive and care labour as well as informal activities contribute to economic growth. Postcolonial feminists thus call on states to formulate policy to reduce the drudgery of unpaid reproductive labour through investments in infrastructure and improved labour legislation that reduces the gendered division of childcare.

3.6. Concluding remarks

This chapter has shown that Western liberal feminism, its uncritical acceptance of the current neoliberal political economic order, and its employment as the dominant theory supporting current global development agendas aimed at supposedly empowering women and producing gender equality, has not been able to engender truly transformative and sustainable means of uplifting poor women in the Global South out of their multiple highly disadvantaged positions. Liberal feminism was critiqued for disregarding the values, principles and practices of non-Western cultures as well as the identities, experiences and agency of Third World women, and nevertheless asserting that it adequately represents both the realities and desires of women living in the South. It was further critiqued for the geographical segregation it creates between the North and the South through the objectification, victimisation and othering of Third world women as well as the silencing of their heterogeneity, which consequently denies them the rights that middle-class women in the West enjoy, as well as restricts them from having control over the design and management of their own development projects. Furthermore liberal feminism was critiqued for not allowing local knowledges to challenge existing power relations and structures that are responsible for Third World women's exclusion, poverty and disempowerment in the first place. On the subject of neoliberal globalism, this chapter showed that WID does not address the devalorisation of feminised labour, the structural privileging of men and masculinity, the depoliticisation of women's subordination in the family and workplace, or the increasing pressure on women to work a triple shift (in familial, informal and formal activities). Finally, gender mainstreaming was critiqued for reducing gender equity to

quantifiable measures; for depoliticising feminist activism by removing gender issues from national and organisational agendas; for not being sufficiently transformative as a result of disregarding the gendered context in which it is implemented, and not challenging gender hierarchies, sexism and masculinism; and for disregarding intersectionalities, and as a result failing to take into considerations the rights of the LGBTIQ community.

This chapter argues that postcolonial feminism and GAD provide valuable insights and proposals in relation to how current development agendas can be improved so as to take into account the actual lived realities, voices, knowledges and agency of the people who are ultimately affected by them. Postcolonial feminism, instead of accepting the existing social and economic order, seeks to challenge and transform dominant gendered, racial and economic structures of power with the ultimate aim of dismantling ‘capitalist racist patriarchy’, empowering women in the Global South, and bringing about truly substantive gender equality both within and between nations.

Chapter Four applies this theoretical framework to the case study, which is the implementation of Agenda 2030 in South Africa. Chapter 4 assesses the SDGs according to the critiques postcolonial feminist scholars have articulated on the five themes outlined in section 3.4. Postcolonial feminism is also employed to critique South Africa’s National Development Plan. Chapter 4 subsequently recommends how these critiques can inform South Africa’s implementation of Agenda 2030 so that substantive gender equality and women’s empowerment in the country is achieved.

CHAPTER 4: A POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF AGENDA 2030 AND ITS APPLICATION TO SOUTH AFRICA

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 provided a theoretical framework that critiques Western liberal feminism and neoliberal development from a postcolonial feminist perspective and that highlights the value of postcolonial feminism in supporting more sustainable and transformative development agendas. This chapter applies this theoretical framework to critique the MDGs, Agenda 2030, as well as South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP). These critiques are employed to offer recommendations in terms of how South Africa can implement Agenda 2030 in order to address the challenges that have been identified regarding South Africa's gender and development context. The study's main research question, namely, *In accommodating the valuable critiques and recommendations of postcolonial feminism on development, how can Agenda 2030 inform South Africa's development and gender context?* guides this chapter. The chapter first provides a short critique of the MDGs upon which it shows that the SDGs vastly improve on their predecessor by broadening their conception of sustainable development. The SDGs are critiqued based on the theoretical framework provided in Chapter 3 and therefore the critiques focus on power relations between the Global North and South, the SDGs' laudatory acceptance of dominant neoliberal economic policies, women's empowerment and agency, the employment of local knowledges, as well as gender mainstreaming. Thereupon the chapter provides a gendered critique of the NDP as well as recommendations on how the SDGs and their critiques can inform sustainable and transformative development in South Africa that leads to substantive gender equality and women's empowerment.

4.2. Critique of MDGs

Fukuda-Parr (2016: 44) critiques the MDGs for being a North-South aid agenda that was driven by Northern development ministers and heads of development agencies with very little input from the real men and women, and boys and girls whose lives they aimed to improve (Esquivel & Sweetman, 2016: 1). She states that even though the MDGs greatly assisted in mobilising public support and communicating a clear purpose for development aid, the goals were mostly relevant for developing countries only, and conferred very little obligations onto the Global North to assist in the development of the Global South (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 44). Civil society organisations argued that the goals on global 'partnership' were especially weak given that they

lacked quantitative targets that held developed countries accountable in aiding the development agenda (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 45).

The MDGs have also been critiqued on the basis for casting development as a narrow and technical process of poverty eradication (which was defined as meeting basic needs), which the development community argued would be achieved if the productive capacity of economies would be enlarged (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 45; Esquivel & Sweetman, 2016: 3). The belief that economic growth automatically leads to improved living standards among the poor has however been refuted by the outcomes of the majority of development projects that have been instituted since the inception of North-South development at the end of World War II, which have led to increased inequality, poverty and suffering amongst those most marginalised by the global economy. By focusing solely on economic productivity and growth, the MDGs failed to recognise that the two most significant causes of poverty are one, embedded in the power relations between the North and the South, and two, the dominant economic models of neoliberal globalism that prioritise corporate profit over human rights and simultaneously fail to produce adequate levels of decent work and exacerbate inequalities within and between states (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 46).

Esquivel and Sweetman (2016: 3) rightly argue that poverty cannot be reduced when the people that the development policies are aimed at are relegated to the margins of the development process, when their economic, political and social rights are denied, or while economic growth fails to create jobs, deliver services, or provide other means which secure the livelihoods of those affected and realise their rights. Civil society organisations have highlighted that sustainable and equal growth can only be achieved if the global economy were to be systemically reformed (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 46).

Furthermore, the MDGs failed to build on the valuable contributions the series of UN-development conferences in the 1990s introduced to the discipline (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 45). Civil society groups critiqued the MDGs for failing to address inequalities between and within developing countries, and for omissions on issues such as economic growth and employment, financial market volatility, the effectiveness of global institutions to manage globalisation, good governance, conflicts, climate change, migration and women's sexual and reproductive health rights, to name but a few (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 45). Human rights scholars also critiqued the goals for not being adequately aligned with human rights standards and principles (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 46). Esquivel and Sweetman (2016: 3) agree that the MDGs were a setback for rights-

based approaches to development, and argue that gender equality and women's rights in particular were neglected.

Fukuda-Parr (2016: 46) shows that the entire 13-point agenda for action which was adopted in Beijing in 1995 was reduced to MDG Goal 3. Gender equality and women's empowerment was reduced to a single target, namely to achieve male/female parity in primary and secondary school education. This reduction silenced the intersection between vertical and horizontal inequalities between women, the interconnectedness of social reproduction and the reproductive economy, as well the precarious nature of contemporary wage labour which is dependent on the exploitation of poor, racialised women. Furthermore MDG 3 did not recognise women's unpaid domestic, care and reproductive labour (O'Manique and Fourie, forthcoming). O'Manique and Fourie (forthcoming) further argue that especially with regards to the absence of girl's and women's rights to bodily autonomy and integrity related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, the MDGs represented an affront to the gains that had been made by the transnational women's movement. Women's health was very narrowly reduced to one goal and target that only explicitly measured maternal mortality.

4.3. SDGs better than the MDGs?

Agenda 2030 vastly improves on the MDGs and even though its core objective remains on ending poverty, the 17 goals and 169 targets have broadened the agenda to include environmental, social and economic concerns (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 45). Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs are principally committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, and acknowledge the important links between inequality, marginalisation and poverty. Another commendable improvement is that SDGs, in the process of their formulation, engaged extensively with member states (particularly middle –income countries) and civil society groups that represent the lived realities of the people the agenda would ultimately be aimed at (Esquivel & Sweetman, 2016: 1; Esquivel, 2016: 10). Therefore, in contrast to the MDGs, the SDGs “were not decided by a ‘small group of technocrats at the UN basement’” (Esquivel, 2016: 10).

Esquivel (2016: 10) highlights that the MDGs were very restrictive in the sense that they adopted an aid-driven approach to poverty reduction, that the majority of the goals were framed as “poor-countries problems”, and that they excessively focused on outcomes (or results) instead of policies and implementation. The SDGs address both outcomes as well as means of implementation, even though reference to the latter is in some instances very vague. The first

few SDGs continue to focus on the priorities outlined by the MDGs, by concentrating on poverty (Goal 1), hunger and food security (Goal 3), health (Goal 3), education (Goal 4), and access to water and sanitation (Goal 6). The rest of the goals extend the focus beyond the MDGs by addressing broad issues that are both relevant to developed as well as developing countries, most notably gender equality and women's empowerment (Goal 5), inequalities within countries (Goal 10), the need for full and productive employment and for sustainable patterns of growth (Goal 8), consumption and production (Goal 12), industrialisation (Goal 9) and urbanisation (Goal 11). The 2030 Agenda also focuses on a number of global issues, notably: inequalities among countries (Goal 10), climate change (Goal 13), marine (Goal 14) and terrestrial eco-systems (Goal 15), the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16), and a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, a goal which in effect pays attention to the means of implementation (Esquivel, 2016: 10).

The input of women's rights and feminist organisations is strongly reflected in the broad scope of the targets under the goal on gender equality and women's empowerment (Goal 5). Ravazi (2016: 29) highlights that the goal importantly recognises that women's oppression is grounded in structural forces and institutions, both public and private, and that gender discrimination is deeply embedded in power inequalities and discriminatory norms that cut across social, economic and political areas. The goal also pays attention to the fact that gender inequalities and injustices pervade all societies and that the achievement of substantive gender equality has a catalytic effect on the attainment of human development, environmental sustainability, good governance, and sustained peace (Ravazi, 2016: 30). Goal 5's scope ranges from discriminatory laws and harmful practices, to violence against women and girls, to sexual and reproductive health and rights, to gender inequality in the distribution of unpaid care work, equal access to productive resources, and women's participation in decision-making (Ravazi, 2016: 26).

4.4. Main Critiques of SDGs

Even though the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been generally commended for vastly improving on the MDGs, many critiques have also emanated from civil society organisations and human rights groups in particular. Esquivel and Sweetman (2016: 2) argue that the principles outlined in the strongly aspirational agenda are worlds away from the lived realities of the poorest and most marginalised individuals living in the Global South and may not be translatable into actions that would unequivocally benefit the people they are targeted at helping. Esquivel (2016: 11) argues that the agenda has an over-ambitious vision which is not

supported by strong enough language, clear means of implementation and policies, or funding mechanisms.

She further argues that, as the MDGs have proven, goal setting is an ineffective way to create an international agenda given that there is the risk of losing overarching policy coherence across and above the goals by instead creating 17 new policy and practice silos. The quantifiable goals and targets make it seem as though progress is possible in meeting all of them simultaneously without tension and inconsistencies between various targets. She argues that the agenda advances the perception that development is achievable through technical fixes and therefore undervalues that development requires a fundamental transformation to society (Esquivel, 2016: 18).

Another major obstacle that may affect the success of the agenda is its implementation, which will be the responsibility of local governments and civil society actors. Esquivel (2016: 10) critiques the agenda for excessively focusing on outcomes (and results) instead of stipulating how policy can be formulated to aid in the implementation of the goals. She argues that the implementation phase will most likely lead to contestations around the scope of the concepts, responsibilities, policies and achievements (Esquivel, 2016: 18). Fukuda-Parr (2016: 50) fears that the transformational potential of the Agenda will be lost in the implementation process through selectivity, simplification and national adaptation. She argues that it is most likely that countries will neglect those goals and targets that address the need to challenge power relations, reform institutions, and achieve other changes in the structures of political economic and social life, given that these will be the hardest to implement and achieve.

4.5. Postcolonial Feminist Critique of Agenda 2030

4.5.1. Power

Cheryl McEwan (2001: 93), a postcolonial feminist scholar, argues that “development is about power”. She argues that relations of power are inherent in the operations, locations and unequal distribution of development and that it is therefore essential that contemporary development policies study relations of power, particularly those between the developed North and the developing South. Valeria Esquivel (2016: 11-12) argues that “power relations are the big elephant in the room of Agenda 2030”. She shows that the word ‘power’ is only mentioned once in outcome document of the 2030 Agenda in paragraph 14, where it states that “there are enormous disparities of opportunity, wealth, and power”. Even though the intended meaning of the word ‘power’ in this instance does not refer to the micro level at which specific actors,

policies and practices are privileged in the governance of a specific social order, these forms of social power relations have been influencing the formulation of Agenda 2030 since the start, and will continue to do so in the future as the agenda is implemented. A good example of who these powerful actors that guard the status quo of the global economic governance framework are, can be seen in the last-minute negotiations and changes introduced in the text of the outcome document (Esquivel, 2016: 11-12).

Given that the SDG goals and targets are global in nature, individual states will ultimately be responsible for their implementation, provided that said states' policy spaces are protected (Esquivel, 2016: 11). During the final negotiation process, wording was added to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), the outcome document laying the foundation for the implementation and financing of Agenda 2030, stipulating that states' policy spaces should remain consistent with relevant international commitments. However, it is exactly these rules and commitments that constrain countries' policy space (Esquivel, 2016: 12). Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez (2016: 88) argue that international agreements and institutions in areas such as trade, investment, finance, and the macroeconomic policies of systemically powerful states restrict the ability of less powerful states to implement their own policies. This means that the attainment of the SDGs, especially in least developed countries where progress towards their achievement is vital, will be hampered by international neoliberal economic agreements that favour powerful states.

Esquivel (2016: 11) shows that Agenda 2030 has become entrenched in 'embedded liberalism' (simply put, a softer version of market liberalism) which emphasises accountability, stakeholder participation, social dialogue, and strong local and global institutions that shape the development process. In reality these accountability mechanisms are however weak and no questions have been raised around how inequalities in income, wealth and power have been produced and reproduced at national and global levels through the actions of powerful actors, especially big transnational corporations who have caused the very problems the SDGs are trying to solve (Esquivel, 2016: 11, 13). Esquivel and Sweetman (2016: 6) critique Agenda 2030 for not challenging the positions of powerful actors such as big countries, international financial institutions, transnational corporations and even INGOs. Esquivel (2016: 13) further critiques the SDGs for lacking measures to hold UN partner organisations, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, who are conferred the responsibility to provide policy coordination and coherence to enhance global macro-economic stability, to account. She argues that if the Agenda cannot

hold the most powerful to account, its overall accountability is meaningless (Esquivel, 2016: 13).

Ravazi (2016: 28) argues that the corporate sector has been in a particularly privileged position to influence the agenda, not only through its own Major Group (Business and Industry) but also through key bodies and channels such as the Secretary General's High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Global Compact, while also having a voice through the inter-governmental process. This has raised many concerns about the SDG process being symbolic of a sustained trend of a widening, and increasingly intimate, relationship between the UN and corporate interests (Ravazi, 2016: 28). Instead of providing commitments to overcome the lack of regulation of the private sector, Agenda 2030 and the AAAA have instead endorsed the corporate sector as a development actor. Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez (2016: 91) argue that the biggest failure of the 2030 development framework is that it legitimates the private sector's role in the development architecture with no binding regulations, safeguards or accountability mechanisms to ensure its compliance with environmental standards and human rights obligations.

Furthermore, even though the Agenda is committed to ensure full and equal representation of all developing countries in "international decision making, norm-setting and global economic governance" (para. 44), the Agenda has not made it clear how it will achieve this or whether contemporary power relations within the UN would even allow this. The idea to have developing countries participate in global economic governance also suggests that by having a seat at the table and being able to voice their concerns, developing countries would be able to change the power structures embedded in the global economy (Esquivel, 2016: 13). However, sitting at the table does not equal having power (Esquivel, 2016: 14). Taking the above critiques into consideration, Agenda 2030 is failing to transform power relations between the North and the South, between the rich and the poor, as well as between men and women, as will be shown below (Esquivel, 2016: 13).

4.5.2. Neoliberal Economics and Financing

Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez (2016: 87) argue that Agenda 2030 does not explicitly recognise the link between women's human rights, gender equality, and the global economic governance framework. They argue that the unregulated profit-seeking nature of the private sector often disrupts the realisation of human rights, worsens gender inequality, and is harmful to the environment (Bidegain Ponte & Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 90). Ravazi (2016: 27) agrees

that the grand vision of the SDGs will be hard to realise unless the dominant economic model, centred on continued growth, industrialisation, trade liberalisation, and public-private partnerships, is revised. Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez (2016: 95) further argue that the UN should institute a human rights-based and pro-development reform of the global economic and financial architecture. They argue that structural reforms are needed to ensure that global economic and financial institutions comply with human rights, and environmental and gender equality standards. They further call for commitments to ensure that developing countries are fully and equally presented in global decision-making. According to Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez (2016: 95) a more democratic system of global economic governance would aid in reducing systemic vulnerabilities, global inequality, and the probability and size of future financial crises. They further argue that sustainable development can only be achieved under conditions of sustainable production and consumption as well as the redistribution of wealth, work, and time (Bidegain Ponte & Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 84)

The SDGs aim to increase the incomes of the bottom 40 per cent of the world's population at a higher rate than the global average but make no mention of the incomes of the top 1 to 10 per cent which could still grow faster than anyone else's. Ravazi (2016: 34) critiques Agenda 2030 for failing to acknowledge financial globalisation's complicity in the exponential growth in wealth inequalities and for failing to suggest redistributive policies, such as redistributive land reforms, ceilings on land ownership to limit land concentration, or wealth and inheritance taxes to level the playing field (Ravazi, 2016: 34). Ravazi (2016: 36) further argues that financial flows need to be better regulated so that those who make huge profits through financial markets can contribute their fair share of taxation. She argues that a tax on financial transactions would not only help discourage speculative activity, but also ensure that the financial sector makes a fairer contribution to sustainable development. Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez (2016:93) further argue that the transfer of resources from the South to the North requires urgent revision given that the capacity of developing countries to raise taxes and mobilise public resources for gender equality is restricted by revenue losses incurred from tax-dodging, tax exemptions, the reduction of tariffs, and the spill-over effects of developed countries' tax rules.

Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez (2016: 95) argue that governments will need to mobilise the maximum available resources by progressive means if they are to realise women's human rights and gender equality. In order to do so, these resources will have to be used to finance comprehensive social protection systems, to provide "universal access to quality social services, social infrastructure, sexual and reproductive health services, quality education, care

services, and gender-sensitive productive diversification and employment policies” (Bidegain Ponte & Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 95). The emphasis, however, falls on ‘progressive taxation’, taking into account that the burden of contributing resources to the public budget falls disproportionately on those with weaker means (Ravazi, 2016: 36). Women are particularly penalised in this regard given their unequal status as workers, producers, consumers, asset owners, and unpaid care providers (Bidegain Ponte & Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 94). Furthermore the failure to mobilise sufficient resources in an equitable manner reduces the state’s capacity to finance social infrastructure and quality social services and transfers on which women are for structural reasons more dependent. If the state fails to provide these social services, the burden of provisioning effectively falls on women as unpaid providers of services to their households (Ravazi, 2016: 36).

4.5.3 Agency and Empowerment

As the previous chapter highlighted, postcolonial feminists place the value of agency at the centre of development, given that the recognition of local people’s agency (or the lack thereof) is symbolic of the power relations embedded in the development process. Postcolonial feminists have critiqued top-down/North-South development approaches for excluding the voices and agency, as well as the priorities and interests, of the individuals they are aimed at (McEwan, 2001: 95). Koczberski (1998: 404) critiqued WID for restricting Third World women from participating in the development process and to have control over the design and management of their own projects. Scholars such as McEwan (2001: 96) and Abu-Lughod (2001) have therefore called on global development agendas not to regard the people of the Global South as powerless, passive victims, but rather to respect their agencies, work with them, and incorporate their local knowledges into development projects that are shaped by the priorities of those they affect.

In order to end gender discrimination, it is essential that Agenda 2030 recognises women’s and girls’ roles as agents of change; that they are not, in fact, intrinsically vulnerable, but that they are rather disadvantaged by unequal gender power relations. Governments should therefore not only focus on the immediate problems that individual women and girls face, but more importantly pay attention to transforming gender power relations (Stuart & Woodroffe, 2016: 76). In line with Chandler’s (2013) conception of agency, women’s and girls’ empowerment does not only equal access to resources and power but also the ability (or agency) to take advantage of opportunities by making decisions and acting upon them. Chandler (2013: 15) argues that development should enlarge individual agency (or choice-making capacity) by removing ‘unfreedoms’ that leave people with little choice and opportunity to exercise their

reasoned agency. Therefore, in order for women and girls to exercise their agency freely, structural impediments to gender equality, such as social norms that perpetuate discrimination, need to be challenged and removed. Furthermore it is important to recognise that gender discrimination intersects with other factors such as poverty, ethnicity, disability and sexuality. Stuart and Woodroffe (2016: 76) argue that women's collective action is essential to achieve this form of transformative change.

However, one of the key concerns feminists and women's rights activists have raised is that collective action is not addressed or advocated in the Goals. Even though leading up to 2015, UN Women supported the inclusion of a target that strengthened women's collective action, this target did not make into Goal 5 which has focuses instead on women's effective participation in, and equal opportunity for, leadership (Esquivel & Sweetman, 2016: 5). As highlighted in the previous chapter, Sardenberg (2008: 19) critiques liberal feminism for failing to establish the link between individual agency, collective action and structural transformation, which she argues are jointly essential to empower women and eradicate patriarchy.

With regards to the Goal on gender equality and women's empowerment, Esquivel (2016: 14) argues that true empowerment can only be achieved when unequal power relations are challenged. Donors and investors clearly favour the apolitical use of the term 'empowerment' given that it does not warrant the transformation of existing power structures that are responsible for exclusion, poverty and disempowerment in the first place. Under such conditions empowerment is viewed only as an instrument to achieve other development priorities such as poverty eradication and democracy building and not as the transformation of the self and the collective as means to dismantle patriarchy (Sardenberg, 2008: 22).

The most important question that needs to be asked in this regard is, who and how does one define empowerment? Esquivel (2016: 14) uses the Expert Group Meeting's (EGM) definition that was prepared for the sixtieth meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The EGM defines empowerment as "secure livelihoods, the ability to enjoy their human rights, a reduction in the unpaid work that hinders the enjoyment of rights, and meaningful participation as actors and leaders in their communities". Esquivel (2016: 16) argues that women's economic empowerment cannot stop at levelling the playing field to allow women to be participants in the market economy on a par with men but that women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels. Goal 5 covers most of these issues, even though 'women's rights' were not included as initially proposed. Esquivel and

Sweetman (2016: 5) commend Goal 5 for recognising that gender equality has economic, political and social dimensions, which are interconnected.

Esquivel and Sweetman (2016: 7) further argue that poverty has shown to be unresponsive to the apolitical conception of empowerment, not only based on the afore-mentioned fact that it is not transformative and challenging enough to existing power structures, but also because as postcolonial feminist scholars point out, the poverty of Third World women does not arise from gender inequality alone, but is rather the result of the intersection of different dimensions of inequality, including race, class and colonial history. Stuart and Woodroffe (2016: 73) therefore argue that governments will have to implement policies that address the specific barriers marginalised people face, recognising that these may be multiple and overlapping. Governments further need to recognise that targets cannot be considered met if all marginalised groups, including women and girls, have not met them. In order to ensure that the Agenda leaves no-one behind, data will have to be nationally disaggregated taking into account all marginalised groups (Stuart & Woodroffe, 2016: 74).

4.5.4. Local Knowledges

The previous chapter also highlighted that the failure of top-down development agendas, such as the MDGs, generated an interest among development practitioners in the possibilities of drawing upon local knowledges of the communities affected by development projects, in an attempt to produce more effective development strategies. This is one of postcolonial feminism's main contributions to development theory. Briggs and Sharp (2004: 661) however argue that theorists and development institutions have nevertheless failed to engage with alternative ways of perceiving development and have therefore missed the opportunity to develop more challenging alternatives. Rather, they have sought to bring locals in line with Western science, knowledge and rationality and therefore have only to a very limited extent consulted local people about their needs, priorities and local knowledges, and have consequently restricted them from setting their own agenda (Briggs & Sharp, 2004: 662)

Unlike the MDGs that were created with very little input from the many social groups whose participation in the implementation of the of the Goals was critical, and whose support for the goals and targets was often lacking, Agenda 2030 was crafted through a highly consultative process with civil society. The post-2015 development agenda recognised from the start that sustainable development was only achievable under conditions of broad public participation in decision-making. The Women's Major Group (WMG), which was established by the UN in

1992 with the purpose of giving women's rights and feminist organisations a voice in the policy process around sustainable development, formed part of nine Major Groups and other stakeholders that actively participated in the consultation process that ultimately created the SDGs (Gabizon, 2016: 100). The WMG brings together over 800 organisations from around the world through its open mailing list.

Even though Agenda 2030 presented an opportunity for feminist activism and women's movements to influence the international development agenda, some problems arose that affected the participation and hence influence Southern grass roots women's groups could have on the Agenda. The WMG together with all other Major Groups had access to all meetings, including informal negotiations, not only as observers but also with allotted speaking slots in all sessions, as well as the right to comment on negotiation documents, to have its comments published on the UN website, and to present recommendations with keynote speakers at the plenary sessions. However, one of the major challenges was finding funds to bring Southern women's organisations to the United States, especially given that women's rights and feminist organisations are often less well funded than other civil society organisations in the development sector, with annual budgets a hundred or even thousand times smaller than for large organisations such as Oxfam (Gabizon, 2016: 103).

Another impediment to the participation of grassroots women's groups related the day-to-day communication via the e-mail list of the WMG which remains predominantly English, hindering the participation of groups from non-English-speaking regions. Funding for multi-language communication has proven to be another major challenge (Gabizon, 2016: 104). As was highlighted in the previous chapter, Spivak (1988) argues that the West is only interested in hearing its own voice, and even if the subaltern is granted the opportunity to express her own views, in order to be heard or taken seriously, she is often forced to adopt the language of development which is dominated by Western concepts and languages. As a consequence Agenda 2030 has not achieved its aim of drawing all states into the realm of development.

The participation of representatives from the Global South, albeit the group the agenda is most concerned about reaching given that it aims to 'leave no-one behind', was constricted. The voices and contributions of bigger, more powerful, and better-funded organisations, the majority of them located in developed and middle-income countries took precedence. Porter and Khumalo (2013) consequently question why African institutions should buy into another global framework that holds them accountable to international organisations as opposed to African citizens.

4.5.5. Gender mainstreaming

Gabizon (2016: 107) highlights that it was the WMG that pushed for a dual strategy of having both a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as specific gender equality targets in the other goals. However, many proposed indicators are not disaggregated by sex and therefore the challenge will be to ensure that women's rights organisations will participate in the planning of the national implementation process and adjusting national indicators to reflect the gender dimension in each of the goals. Gender will therefore have to be mainstreamed into all of the 17 goals.

As was highlighted in the previous chapter, postcolonial feminism critiques gender mainstreaming for reducing gender equity to quantifiable measures which depoliticises substantive gender equality, sexism and masculinism given that it does challenge or transform gender hierarchies in society and because it lessens the possibility for civil society groups to provide input (Joseph, Gouws & Parpart, 2011; Gabizon, 2016: 109). Given that the SDGs and targets that address the need to challenge power relations, reform institutions, and achieve other changes in the structures of political, social and economic life are the hardest to implement and achieve, it is most likely that governments will neglect these targets and rather focus on quantifiable targets that are easier to achieve (Fukuda-Parr, 2016: 50).

Postcolonial feminism further critiques gender mainstreaming for depoliticising feminist activism by removing gender issues from national and organisational agendas based on the assumption that because gender is being mainstreamed, specific funds and programmes that focus on women have become superfluous (Joseph, Gouws & Parpart, 2011: 11). In the past gender mainstreaming has also failed to improve the living standards of most poor women, especially those who face multiple levels of vertical discrimination, as well as women with nonheteronormative sexual identities and intersex people, given that it essentialises both women and men into one homogenous group.

Esquivel (2016: 18) has raised concerns that the interconnectedness between gender, class, and political dimensions of inequalities will be missed in the implementation phase of the agenda. Postcolonial feminists would recommend that governments and civil society groups, implementing Agenda 2030, recognise the importance of material and cultural differences among women and girls in order to ensure that they benefit equally from all interventions. They furthermore argue that mainstreaming should be informed by dialogue with civil society and gender activists (True, 2010: 193). Goetz and Jenkins (2016: 135) critique the 2030 agenda for

not having included a proposed target on increasing the scale and impact of women's collective action, but nevertheless argue that strong domestic women's rights movements are essential if the SDGs (especially Goal 5) are to be achieved. Even though no government is legally bound to implement the goals, they will be morally and reputationally bound. Civil society groups, including women's rights movements and organisations may be able to use the increased political space granted by the SDGs to advocate for more progressive gender policies (Stuart & Woodroffe, 2016: 79). Women's rights organisations also need to hold governments accountable for their performance in achieving gender equality and get them to commit to increasing national spending on initiatives that advance women's rights and empowerment (Goetz & Jenkins, 2016: 134). Stuart and Woodroffe (2016: 75) further argue that governments should also not rely too heavily on women's ministries to implement the gender-related goals and targets but that commitment will be needed across governments, including involvement from economic ministries.

4.6. A Postcolonial Feminist Critique of South Africa's NDP

In 2012 the South African government released its National Development Plan (NDP), which aims to ensure that all South Africans attain a decent standard of living through the elimination of poverty and inequality by 2030. The plan identifies the key components of a decent standard of living as: housing, water, electricity and sanitation; safe and reliable public transport; quality education and skills development; safety and security; quality health care; social protection; employment; recreation and leisure; a clean environment; and adequate nutrition (National Planning Commission, 2012).

South Africa played a key role in the negotiations and processes that led to the creation of Agenda 2030. South Africa's positions during the negotiations were largely informed by the priorities set in the NDP. The SDGs will have to be implemented in conjunction with the NDP in order to address local and global development concerns. South Africa has however affirmed that the triple challenge of eradicating poverty, inequalities and unemployment will be prioritised in the implementation of Agenda 2030. Domestic priorities, as formulated under the NDP, will thus take precedence over other focus areas in the SDGs (Institute for Global Dialogue and Oxfam, 2013: 10).

Even though the NDP is broadly aligned with the SDGs, there are areas of the NDP that are less focused and require capacity building and work. These include food security and sustainable agriculture, green industrialisation, labour rights and working conditions, and other issues

related to social, political and economic inclusion, as well as equality of access to opportunities (Wits School of Governance: OR Tambo Debates, 2016). In further comparing the NDP to the SDGs, gender is one of the key areas where focus is markedly lacking.

The NDP does recognise that women make up a large percentage of the poor, especially in rural areas and proposes the following measures to advance women's equality: the expansion of public employment; the transformation of the economy; the celebration of women leaders; addressing social, cultural, religious and educational barriers to women entering the job market; expanding social infrastructure to reduce the burden of women's unpaid labour; making South Africa safer; ensuring secure tenure for female farmers; improving the health of pregnant women; improving the coverage of antiretroviral treatment to all HIV-positive people, and offering microbicides to all women 16 years and older (National Planning Commission, 2012: 33). Altogether, these are no small tasks, and the NDP allocates them to the Department of Women and to the Commission for Gender Equality, a Chapter Nine institution established through the Constitution to act as an oversight body, protecting women's rights and gender equality.

Apart from the very brief mention of the above-listed proposals for addressing gender inequality, Amanda Gouws, former commissioner of the Commission for Gender Equality and current SARChI Chair in Gender Politics, critiques the NDP for being generally gender blind (Agenda Feminist Media, 2013). Much like the MDGs that were shortly critiqued at the beginning of this chapter, the NDP is a neoliberal economic document that views development as a narrow technical process of poverty eradication achievable through economic growth, albeit ignoring that economic growth has proven to worsen the living standards of the poor, especially women. The NDP, much like Agenda 2030 fails to recognise that economic neoliberalism is one of the most significant causes of poverty given that it does not produce adequate levels of work, deliver essential quality social services, or decrease inequalities. Contemporary realities in South Africa attest to the fact that continued neoliberal development plans have led to increased inequality, poverty and unemployment, of which women are bearing the brunt.

The South African Department of Women released a report in August 2015 entitled "The Status of Women in the South African Economy", which shows that women, particularly African women residing in rural areas, are the main bearers of poverty given that they are spatially separated from quality education and income-earning opportunities and lack access to productive resources, such as arable land, credit and technology (Department of Women, 2015: 115). The report shows that around 72 per cent of women in South Africa still live below the

poverty line (Department of Women, 2015: 126). These realities affirm postcolonial feminists' assertion that a woman's geographical location determines her relationship to rights and state protection (Agathangelou and Turcotte, 2010: 45). Sa'ar (2005: 690) argues that poor Third World women are to a large extent subjected to infrastructurally underdeveloped residential areas, housing shortages, unemployment, and high levels of crime and communal violence.

Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey shows that in the second quarter of 2016 29.1 per cent of the country's women were unemployed compared to 24.6 per cent of men. Women make up the majority of the unemployed across all age categories, especially among the youth (StatsSA, 2016: xx), indicating that there are systemic barriers preventing women from entering the job market. Even though patriarchal attitudes remain the main barrier hindering women's entry into the job market, other factors intersecting with gender such as race and class act as further levels of discrimination. As indicated above, African women and women living in rural areas are the most likely to be unemployed. Gouws critiques the NDP for representing women as one vulnerable homogenised group, with no reference to their diversity and the multi-levels of discrimination they face according to their race, class and sexual orientation, or how these intersect to create an embedded disadvantage for women (Agenda Feminist Media, 2013). Postcolonial feminists would argue that by not recognising the intersection between vertical inequality with the multiple and overlapping horizontal inequalities of gender, race and class, the NDP is most likely to fail at diminishing persistent poverty, discrimination and social exclusion (Kabeer, 2015: 190).

Grounded in neoliberal economic theory, the NDP advances the idea that by increasing women's labour participation, gender inequality is automatically alleviated. Statistics do however show that women's integration into economic life have been accompanied by increasing gender-based discrimination and segregation in labour markets, both horizontally and vertically (Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 89). In South Africa, as in most countries around the world, women that do have the opportunity to enter in the job market are prone to face severe gender discrimination in the workplace and are shown to earn far less than their male counterparts. Women are also heavily underrepresented in senior management. There is also a great disparity in the job opportunities available to women in comparison to men. Women predominate in positions that are insecure, low-paid and of inferior status and are more likely to be part-time or temporary workers. They are also more likely to be employed in the informal rather than the formal economy (Thorpe, 2015b). Given that vertical and horizontal gender inequalities render women from poor and socially marginalised groups especially

desperate for access to income, these women tend to be concentrated in the lowest paying activities that are simultaneously the least desirable given their precarious and exploitative nature as well as the stigma associated with them (Kabeer, 2015: 196).

Even though the NDP supports the idea that economic growth automatically translates into decent job creation and sustainable societal wellbeing, it does not recognise that the unequal division of labour described above, as well as the systemic role of unpaid care work are essential to achieve economic growth (Bidegain Ponte and Rodríguez Enríquez, 2016: 87). The NDP only recognises ‘formal economy’ contributions and therefore does not measure women’s contributions to the economy through unpaid domestic, child-care, and home-based care for the elderly and persons with disabilities (Agenda Feminist Media, 2013). It also ignores that patriarchal attitudes reinforce stereotypical gender roles, meaning that women remain responsible for the majority of housework, even when they are employed (Thorpe, 2015). Gouws argues that by not addressing women’s gender specific contribution to, or needs within the economy or in development, the NDP’s goal of achieving economic growth and reducing inequalities will be severely hampered. If women’s unpaid reproductive and care work as well as informal activities are not recognised, the feminisation of poverty will continue unabated (Agenda Feminist Media, 2013).

Ravazi (2016: 31) therefore calls on the state to formulate policy to reduce the drudgery of unpaid domestic and care work through investments in infrastructure, and the formal redistribution of reproductive work between women and men and between families and society. Thorpe (2015b) also calls for improved labour legislation that grants both paternity and maternity leave so that the gendered division of child care is reduced, allowing new mothers and fathers to raise children together, and support one another during their careers. Gouws further argues that provisions should be made for childcare facilities in the workplace and that flexible working conditions need to be introduced (Agenda Feminist Media, 2013).

The NDP further fails to recognise that the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment is a fertile breeding ground for violence, particularly violence against women from poor backgrounds (Department of Women, 2015: 139). As shown in the previous chapter, poor Third World women are frequently exposed to severe measures of domestic and sexual oppression. In these cases the state usually acts as a passive or active preserver of patriarchal control and male domestic violence (Sa’ar, 2005: 690). This is certainly the case in South Africa, as will be proven below. Kabeer (2015: 194) argues that domestic violence is often an outlet for men’s powerlessness in the face of grinding poverty, especially when coupled with

heavy alcohol consumption (Jewkes, 2002: 1425). Jewkes (2002: 1424) shows that a crisis in male identity, often associated with men's inability to meet social expectations of manhood, are one of the main causes of domestic violence. This holds particularly true in societies with stronger ideologies of male dominance (Jewkes, 2002: 1425). As highlighted in Chapter 2, Jacob Zuma has come to advocate a form of masculinity, which he albeit asserts in the name of tradition, that is patriarchal, implicitly violent, and that glorifies ideas of male sexual entitlement (Morell, Jewkes and Lindegger, 2012: 17). Under this form of masculinity, which has come to dominate especially among the black population of South Africa, the violent assertion of male entitlement to women's bodies is being normalised (Hassim, 2014a: 178). Therefore the unequal position of women in society; male vulnerability in the face of the triple challenge; and the normative use of violence as predicated by the dominant form of masculinity in South Africa, coupled with heavy alcohol consumption, are the main stressors contributing to a GBV rate that is amongst the highest in the world. Despite alarming statistics showing that 75 per cent of South African men have perpetrated violence against women (Gender Links, 2011), that GBV costs South Africa between R28.4 billion and R42.4 billion a year (KPMG, 2014: 2), and that it has major health effects especially with regards to the spread of HIV, the NDP completely ignores the crisis and provides no strategies to address it.

South Africa's Department of Women (2015) rightly argues that GBV deprives its victims of their right to bodily autonomy and integrity, which introduces another critique of the NDP, namely that it fails to address women's sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as the gendered nature of the crisis of South Africa's public health system. Even though South Africa has ratified the Beijing Platform for Action and guarantees equal access to sexual and reproductive rights in its Constitution, realities on the ground are disheartening. South African schools still do not provide comprehensive sexuality education, meaning that many learners lack access to accurate information on how to avoid an unwanted pregnancy. Even though access to contraceptives can be lauded as good, most women are not provided adequate information regarding the different methods of contraception available to them or consulted on which method would best suit their needs (Stevens, 2016).

Under the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act, abortion is legal in South Africa, yet the health system is not supporting and enabling the management of abortion services. In 2014 less than 40 per cent of surgical designated abortion facilities were operational and medical abortion guidelines are only available in the Western Cape (Stevens, 2016). In South Africa abortion is often publicly condemned by political authorities, healthcare workers, patients and their

families, but privately sanctioned. As a consequence rates of illegal abortion remain unacceptably high and septic abortion is amongst the most common causes of female death (Hodes, 2016: 79). The biggest contributor to South Africa's alarmingly high maternal mortality rate (269 deaths per 100 000 births) is HIV related infections. Nevertheless 60 per cent of maternal deaths in South Africa are preventable; occurring due to a lack of access to quality healthcare (van der Merwe, 2015).

Last but not least, the NDP can be critiqued for not addressing the continuation of harmful cultural practices such as virginity testing, *ukuthwala* (abduction of bride to be), female genital mutilation, *ukungena* (handing over of widow to her deceased husband's male relative), and under-age *ilobolo* (engagement). The NDP further ignores the fact that culture and tradition (albeit codified in customary law) continue to be invoked to justify patriarchal and sexist practices even though these practices deliberately violate gender equality and women's rights (Gouws, 2013: 42). Postcolonial feminists have called for the abolition and prohibition of traditional cultural practices that are harmful to women (Burman, 1995: 24).

4.7. South Africa and the SDGs

If the South African government wants to achieve its aim of eradicating poverty, inequality and unemployment it will have to take a more comprehensive approach to development that does not simply equate it to an increase in economic productivity, but that focuses on social, economic and environmental concerns as well. It will have to recognise the root causes of poverty, including the feminisation of poverty and social reproduction, as well as the important intersections between vertical and horizontal inequality, marginalisation and poverty. It should further take into account that neoliberal economic policies are a significant cause to the worsening triple challenge that is plaguing South Africa, and that they are leading to an increase in human rights violations, especially for women.

It is essential that the South African government recognise that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental structural components to sustainable development, as well as human rights priorities in their own rights and therefore instrumental to economic prosperity. It is thus an absolute necessity that all forms of gender inequality are eliminated and that women's and girl's rights are guaranteed. In order to achieve this, the government will have to recognise, as postcolonial feminism strongly asserts, that women's oppression is grounded in structural forces and institutions, both public and private, and that gender discrimination is deeply embedded in power inequalities and discriminatory norms that cut across social, political and

economic areas. In order to alleviate these realities, South Africa will have to come up with a development plan that like the SDGs addresses discriminatory laws and harmful cultural practices, violence against women and girls, sexual and reproductive health rights, gender inequality in the distribution of unpaid care work, unequal access to productive resources, and women's participation in decision-making.

The new development plan should not follow the example of WID by merely including women in the development process while continuing to regard them as intrinsically vulnerable, but should rather focus on increasing women's and girls' agency and autonomy to not only end discrimination and violence against them but also to guarantee gender justice and long term sustainable development. As postcolonial feminists would argue, women's empowerment should not only focus on the immediate problems that individual women and girls face, such as unequal access to resources, but should also pay attention to transforming gender power relations and enlarging women's and girls' agency to take advantage of opportunities by making decisions and acting upon them. Women's empowerment cannot stop at increasing women's participation in economic life but should further provide opportunities for women and girls to enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels. It is also important to address factors that intersect with gender discrimination such as poverty, race, disability and sexuality.

Postcolonial feminists argue that women's collective action is essential to achieve this form of transformative change. Here South Africa is however at a disadvantage given that the country's women's movement has become fragmented with little coordination between women's organisations. With the launch of the ANC into power in 1994, many talented women activists were absorbed into government positions in order to fill quotas, creating a vacuum at the grassroots level. The women's movement in South Africa is therefore not a clear network of organisations working towards women's rights, but rather a few scattered organisations and a disbanded collection of individual activists working for government and in development organisations (Mannell, 2012: 41). Women's activism in South Africa therefore calls for desperate renewal, especially considering that a strong domestic women's movement is essential to ensure that the gender-related goals and targets of the SDGs are achieved. Women's rights movements and organisations will have to hold government accountable for its performance in achieving gender equality and get it to commit to increasing national spending on initiatives that advance women's rights and empowerment.

The responsibility of nationally implementing the gender-related goals and targets can also not only fall on the Department of Women and the Commission for Gender Equality but will require the cooperation of various other government departments as well as women's rights organisations and gender activists. Given that many of the proposed indicators in the SDGs are not disaggregated by sex, and the critical inter-linkages between the 17 goals are not made explicit, gender will have to be mainstreamed into and across all of the 17 goals. Postcolonial feminist scholars argue that here the participation of civil society groups will be critical. In the past, NGOs have struggled to implement gender mainstreaming, arising from a resistance to gender-related change within the organisations themselves. The dominance of masculine norms in the leadership, management and division of labour between women and men, together with other gender inequalities in organisational spaces will therefore have to be addressed. It is also important that gender mainstreaming does not depoliticise substantive equality by ignoring the underlying structural inequalities within the organisations themselves as well as within wider society. Lastly, it is essential that gender mainstreaming takes into account intersecting levels of discrimination among women and girls and ensure that all women benefit equally from all interventions.

4.8. Concluding remarks

This chapter has critiqued the MDGs for being driven by Northern development practitioners with very little input from the individuals whose lives they aimed to improve and for not holding the Global North accountable in aiding developing countries in achieving progress. The Goals were further critiqued for casting development as a narrow technical process of meeting basic needs through an increase in economic productivity and growth, despite growing evidence showing that economic growth on its own does not result in overall societal progress. Furthermore the Goals were critiqued for not being adequately aligned with human rights standards and for neglecting gender equality and women's rights in particular.

The SDGs were lauded for broadening the development agenda to include environmental, social and economic concerns; for being principally committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms; and for recognising the connection between inequality, marginalisation and poverty. The SDGs further engaged extensively with developing country stakeholders and civil society, including women's rights and feminist organisations. The latter's input is reflected in the broad scope of the targets under the gender equality and women's empowerment goal.

The SDGs were critiqued for having an over-ambitious vision and for excessively focusing on outcomes and results instead of stipulating how policy can be formulated in the implementation of the goals, or how they will be funded. Further, by not making explicit the critical interlinkages between the 17 goals, there is a risk of losing overarching policy coherence and bypassing the transformational potential of the Agenda in national adaptation.

The postcolonial feminist critique of the SDGs showed that the Agenda has failed to transform power relations between the North (rich) and the South (poor) by granting powerful states, international financial institutions, the corporate sector and big INGOs privileged influence in the formulation of the agenda, and for not holding them accountable in complying with human rights, environmental and gender equality standards. The SDGs were critiqued for not recognising the link between women's rights abuses, gender inequality and the unregulated profit-seeking nature of the dominant global neo-liberal economic model. The chapter argued that the grand vision of the SDGs will be hard to realise unless the global economic governance model is democratically reformed and the financial sector is held accountable to contribute to sustainable development.

The chapter further critiqued the SDGs for constricting the participation of Southern grassroots women's organisations and instead privileging the contributions of bigger, more powerful and better-funded organisations that are principally situated in the Global North. Further, the SDGs failed to include a target on women's collective action despite clear indications that gender will have to be mainstreamed into and across the goals in their national implementation. Women's collective action is essential in ensuring that women's and girl's agency and freedom are enlarged, that gendered power structures in society are transformed, and that women's rights are guaranteed. Further women's groups' participation in the implementation of the agenda is essential. They also have the responsibility to hold governments accountable in achieving gender equality and increasing national spending on women's rights and empowerment initiatives.

South Africa's NDP was critiqued for being generally gender-blind, for not recognising the feminisation of poverty and unemployment; for silencing the intersection between vertical and horizontal inequalities between women, and the interconnectedness of social reproduction and the reproductive economy; for ignoring the precarious nature of contemporary wage labour that is dependent of the exploitation of poor, racialised women; for not recognising women's unpaid domestic, care and reproductive labour; for not addressing gender-based violence or women's

sexual and reproductive health and rights; and lastly, for not paying attention to discriminatory customary law and the continuation of harmful cultural practices.

The above-mentioned critiques and recommendations were used to make suggestions on how South Africa can implement Agenda 2030 in order to achieve substantive gender equality and women's empowerment. The next chapter concludes this study. In Chapter 5 the study's key findings are reviewed and its main contributions are summarised. The limitations of the study are identified, informing recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 critiqued Agenda 2030 using a postcolonial feminist theoretical framework and employed this critique to suggest how South Africa can implement the SDGs in conjunction with its NDP to achieve substantive gender equality and women's empowerment. In this final chapter the key findings of this study are reviewed and the main contributions of the study are summarised. The chapter begins by reiterating the research problem and questions while simultaneously providing a short summary of Chapters 2 to 4. The study's main findings are then reviewed and the utility of the theoretical framework is considered. Before concluding with final thoughts and remarks, the chapter provides themes for future research on gender and the SDGs, building on the theoretical foundations informing this study.

5.2. Research Problem and Questions

The Sustainable Development Goals, the main agenda informing global development up until 2030, were unveiled in September 2015. They replace the Millennium Development Goals that at the start of the new millennium aimed to halve global poverty by 2015. The MDGs have been extensively critiqued, not only on the basis of not having been met, but also for casting development as a very narrow and technical process of meeting basic needs. The SDGs vastly improve on the MDGs – but going into the new development era – gender inequality and women's rights abuses remain pervasive, especially in developing countries and post-conflict societies of which South Africa is a prime example. Gender and Development and postcolonial feminism are two cognate theoretical approaches to women's development that seek to transform dominant gendered, racial and economic structures of power with the ultimate aim of dismantling 'capitalist racist patriarchy', and would in their application most definitely lead to substantive gender equality and women's empowerment. Nevertheless, liberal feminism and economic neoliberalism continue to inform global development agendas. This approach is unlikely to lead to sustainable, far-reaching development. Based on the above described research problem, this study aimed to highlight the value of postcolonial feminism and employ the theory to critique Agenda 2030 with the ultimate aim of suggesting how this critique can inform South Africa's implementation of the SDGs. The main research question guiding this study was thus formulated as follows: *In accommodating the valuable critiques and recommendations of postcolonial feminism on development, how can Agenda 2030 inform South Africa's development and gender context?*

In order to answer the main research question, the study first needed to define its main concept, namely *Agenda 2030*, and locate it within the broader context of women's development. The study's first supportive research question thus reads: *What is Agenda 2030 and how can it be positioned within the context of women's development?* The literature review in Chapter 2 served the purpose of answering this supportive research question. Chapter 2 provided a history of women's development from 1970 when Ester Boserup published *Women's Role in Economic Development* to the emergence of GAD in the 1980s. The chapter went on to discuss the transformation of development discourse in the 1990s which led to the unveiling of the first ever global target-setting development agenda, the MDGs, in 2000. This largely unsuccessful development agenda expired in 2015 and was replaced by the new SDGs in September of the same year. Even though Agenda 2030 in rhetoric vastly improves on the MDGs, the implementation of the SDGs will prove whether they are truly sustainable, transformative and far-reaching. The gender-related goals and targets are of particular interest to this study; therefore Chapter 2 also reviewed transnational women's organisations' critiques of Agenda 2030. The literature review further sketched South Africa – the case study's – gender context as well as discussed the country's engagement with, and success in meeting, the MDGs.

The remaining two supportive research questions pertained to the theory supporting this study. The questions read: *What are the limitations of liberal feminism and WID in informing transformative, sustainable and all-inclusive development frameworks, and what is the value and utility of postcolonial feminism and GAD, specifically in critiquing the SDGs and informing South Africa's implementation of Agenda 2030 in conjunction with its NDP?* Chapter 2 provided a critique of WID and an appraisal of GAD. The theoretical framework in Chapter 3 contextualised postcolonial feminist theory and reviewed its contributions to (women's) development theory. The chapter concurrently critiqued liberal feminism and economic neoliberalism from a postcolonial feminist development perspective. The utility and value of postcolonial feminism in informing development theory and practice was made explicit.

The main research question guided Chapter 4. Chapter 4 briefly critiqued the MDGs; explored how the SDGs improve on their predecessor; critiqued the SDGs using the theoretical framework provided in Chapter 3; critiqued the NDP; and made recommendations on how South Africa can implement the SDGs, taking into account their postcolonial feminist critiques and general recommendations postcolonial feminists have articulated on development.

5.3. Main Findings

This study's main argument is that GAD (a theoretical approach to development that is rooted in postcolonial feminist theory) offers a more transformative and sustainable approach to development than its older and more dominantly employed relative, WID (a theory grounded in liberal feminism and modernisation theory). The MDGs and South Africa's NDP are steadfastly rooted in WID and this study argues that they have as a consequence not been able to achieve a reduction in the feminisation of the triple challenge, or other forms of gender discrimination and inequality. The SDGs have to certain extent borrowed from the valuable contributions of GAD but can mainly be critiqued for not recognising that the dominant neoliberal economic and financial model they espouse, disrupts the realisation of women's rights and worsens gender inequality. If South Africa were to implement Agenda 2030, taking into account the postcolonial feminist critiques and recommendations provided in this study, the country would most likely be able to achieve substantive gender equality and women's empowerment. The deep structural transformation of gender hierarchies in political, economic and social life is however not an undemanding challenge especially given that "South Africa remains at best a socially traditionalist, or at worst normatively and culturally misogynistic" society (O'Manique and Fourie, 2016: 107).

This study has shown that WID (counting Western liberal feminism), and its uncritical acceptance of the current neoliberal political economic order, and its employment as the dominant theory supporting current global development agendas aimed at supposedly empowering women and producing gender equality, has not been able to engender truly transformative and sustainable means of uplifting poor women in the Global South out of their multiple highly disadvantaged positions. Instead WID's capitalist and modernist development agenda was critiqued for favouring economic growth and profit at the expense of human rights, gender equality and environmental concerns. The theory was further critiqued for ignoring the sources and nature of women's subordination and oppression and for disregarding the impact of global inequities on Third World women, as well as relations of exploitation between women based on intersectionalities of class, race and culture.

Liberal feminism was also critiqued for disregarding the values, principles and practices of non-Western cultures as well as the identities, experiences and agency of Third World women, and nevertheless asserting that it adequately represents both the realities and desires of women living in the South. By barring local knowledges from challenging existing power relations and structures that are responsible for Third World women's exclusion, poverty and

disempowerment in the first place, WID has restricted Third World women from having control over the design and management of their own development projects.

Further, despite advocating women's increased labour force participation, WID has not addressed increasing gender-based discrimination and segregation in labour markets, or the precarious nature of contemporary wage labour which is dependent on the exploitation of poor, racialised women. Also, by focusing exclusively on the productive aspects of women's work, WID has failed to account for women's contributions to the economy through unpaid domestic, care and reproductive labour.

This study argues that GAD (counting postcolonial feminist contributions to development theory) provides a more transformative, far-reaching and sustainable approach to development. Unlike WID, GAD does not merely support superficial law reform, guaranteeing that women have equal opportunities to participate with men in economic life, but instead seeks to fundamentally challenge and transform dominant patriarchal, racial and economic power structures, both in the public and private domain. Its ultimate aim is to dismantle what Peterson (2012) terms "capitalist racist patriarchy". Derived from this aim, GAD recognises that gender equality has interconnected economic, political and social dimensions and that the power inequalities and discriminatory norms embedded in these dimensions need to be challenged. In order to achieve this, development needs to recognise women's and girl's roles as agents of change, providing them with opportunities to exercise their reasoned agency, while guaranteeing that their human rights and freedoms are respected. GAD importantly takes into account that women experience oppression differently in accordance with their race, class, colonial history, culture and position in the international economy and therefore aims to reach the most marginalised individuals first in order to leave no-one behind.

Postcolonial feminism also seeks to recover the voices of marginalised, oppressed and dominated Third World women by creating development agendas that draw on the complex experiences and knowledges of the communities they affect. GAD ultimately seeks to create a world in which Third World women can live safe and decent lives according to how they define a good life.

Taking the critiques of WID and the established value of GAD into account, this study commended the SDGs for recognising that women's oppression is grounded in structural forces and institutions, and that gender discrimination is deeply embedded in power inequalities and discriminatory norms that cut across social, political and economic areas. The Agenda also

importantly acknowledges that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental structural components to sustainable development as well as human rights priorities in their own right and therefore instrumental in achieving economic prosperity. The SDGs were lauded for vastly improving on the MDGs by including targets on discriminatory laws and harmful cultural practices, violence against women and girls, sexual and reproductive health rights, gender inequality in the distribution of unpaid care work, unequal access to productive resources, and women's participation in decision-making.

Agenda 2030 was however critiqued for not transforming power relations between the North and South and the rich and the poor, by endorsing the corporate sector as a development actor, and for not holding powerful states, international financial institutions, the corporate sector and big INGOs accountable in complying with human rights, environmental and gender equality standards. The Agenda was critiqued for not recognising that unless the dominant economic neo-liberal governance model is reformed, women's rights abuses and gender inequality could not be put to an end. The Agenda was further critiqued for constricting the participation of Southern grassroots women's groups, and instead privileging the voices and contributions of bigger, more powerful and better-funded organisations. Lastly the SDGs were critiqued for not including a target on women's collective action, which may potentially hamper the transformative potential of the ambitious targets when they are nationally adapted. The study argued that women's collective action is essential in informing the implementation of the agenda and holding governments to account for their performance in achieving gender equality and getting them to commit to increasing national spending on initiatives that advance women's rights and empowerment.

In order to achieve substantive gender equality and women's empowerment in South Africa, the study argued that the government will have to draw from the strengths of the SDGs and other valuable insights postcolonial feminist scholars have contributed to development thought. These include recognising that gender equality has interconnected economic, political and social dimensions in which power inequalities and norms are embedded that need to be structurally transformed. Most importantly the government needs to admit that its continued neoliberal economic development policies are the major cause to the worsening triple challenge in South Africa and that its consequences are predominantly borne by women. It is essential that the government address the feminisation and inter-generational transfer of poverty; the important intersections between vertical and horizontal inequality; the exploitative, racist, and sexist nature of contemporary wage labour; as well as the interconnectedness between the disregard for

women's reproductive labour and social reproduction. Other important challenges that need to be addressed are: South Africa's discriminatory customary law, harmful cultural practices, gender-based violence, women's sexual and reproductive health, gender inequality in the distribution of unpaid care work, unequal access to productive resources, and women's collective action. The latter is particularly important in ensuring that South African women's freedom and agency is enlarged, that the patriarchal power structures in society are transformed, and that women's rights in the country are guaranteed.

5.4. Theoretical Limitations

This study employed a specific feminist theory, namely postcolonial feminism, to critique Agenda 2030 and its application to South Africa in order to narrow the scope of this critique down to not only a few random gender-related factors, but more specifically to five factors that are particularly relevant to a composite marginalised group the SDGs aim at reaching, namely Third World women. Even though postcolonial feminist theory provides an enormously diverse and complex analysis of development, this study selected five factors from the chosen literature that proved particularly useful in critiquing Agenda 2030. These are: unequal power relations; agency, empowerment and freedom; indigenous knowledge; capitalist racist patriarchy; and gender mainstreaming. Even though these five factors aided in providing a fairly composite gendered critique of the SDGs there are a few important factors which the theoretical framework, as well as the case study, did not allow the study to engage with.

The study was unable to discuss the critical interlinkages between Goal 5 and the remaining 16 goals, particularly the increased impact climate change has on women, especially those that are subsistence farmers (Goal 13), and the important link between women's empowerment and building stable and peaceful societies (Goal 16). Little attention could be afforded to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (a target in Goal 5 which has lately received a lot of critique), or the agenda's disregard for the rights of sex workers and the LGBTIQ community. Furthermore the contribution of men in alleviating gender inequality (by for example challenging violent forms of masculinity that contribute to gender-based violence and the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases) could not be investigated.

5.5. Recommendations for Future Research

All feminist theories provide valuable insights and critiques on development, and this study could easily have been informed by radical-, Marxist-, standpoint-, or ecofeminism. A Marxist feminist critique of the SDGs would provide a more holistic critique of the UN's widening and

increasingly intimate relationship with corporate interests and its uncritical acceptance of the dominant neo-liberal economic order which has shown to worsen gender inequality and disrupt women's rights. An ecofeminist theoretical framework could critique the agenda for disregarding the increased impact climate change has on women and could benefit from focusing on a developing country that is particularly affected by climate change as a case study.

Due to time constraints and ethical dilemmas this study was unable to collect primary field data. The study would have benefitted from in-depth unstructured interviews with South African experts in the field of development and gender studies, as well as professionals from local NGOs whose organisations share an interest in the goals set out in Agenda 2030. An empirical study could probe local NGOs' views on Agenda 2030 as well as investigate how the agenda will influence their organisation's work.

South Africa (a developing and post-conflict society) was chosen as a case study to investigate how Agenda 2030 could inform the country's gender and development context. Given that the SDGs confer obligations onto both developing and developed countries in meeting their targets, it would be interesting to conduct a study that compares the agenda's application to the gender and development context of a developing country on the one hand and a developed country on the other.

5.6. Concluding Remarks

SDG 5 has provided a wide-ranging list of targets aimed at eradicating gender inequality and advancing women's rights and empowerment. The outcome documents of Agenda 2030 have however not clearly articulated how the isolated initiatives they propose will succeed in delivering truly gender-transformative change. South Africa has affirmed that its unreservedly gender-blind NDP will inform its engagement with the SDGs. South Africa's 30 million women are thus projected to be left behind.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIST OF MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TARGETS

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Goal 1 | Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger |
| | <p>1.a Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day</p> <p>1.b Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</p> <p>1.c Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</p> |
| Goal 2 | Achieve universal primary education |
| | <p>2.a Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling</p> |
| Goal 3 | Promote gender equality and empower women |
| | <p>3.a Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015</p> |
| Goal 4 | Reduce child mortality |
| | <p>4.a Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate</p> |
| Goal 5 | Improve maternal health |
| | <p>5.a Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio</p> <p>5.b Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health</p> |
| Goal 6 | Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases |
| | <p>6.a Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</p> <p>6.b Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it</p> <p>6.c Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</p> |
| Goal 7 | Ensure environmental sustainability |
| | <p>7.a Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</p> <p>7.b Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss</p> <p>7.c Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation</p> |

- 7.d** By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Goal 8 Develop a global partnership for development

- 8.a** Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system
- Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally
- 8.b** Address the special needs of the least developed countries
- Includes: tariff and quota free access for the least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction
- 8.c** Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (through the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)
- 8.d** Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Source: Millennium Development Goals Indicators, 2008

APPENDIX B: LIST OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TARGETS

Goal 1 End Poverty in all its forms everywhere

- 1.1** By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
- 1.2** By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 1.3** Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- 1.4** By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
- 1.5** By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
- 1.a** Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions
- 1.b** Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

- 2.1** By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
- 2.2** By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons
- 2.3** By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment
- 2.4** By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement

resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

- 2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed
- 2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries
- 2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round
- 2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility

Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages

- 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- 3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births
- 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
- 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing
- 3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
- 3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and

the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

- 3.8** Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- 3.9** By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination
- 3.a** Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate
- 3.b** Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all
- 3.c** Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States
- 3.d** Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all

- 4.1** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- 4.2** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- 4.3** By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- 4.4** By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 4.5** By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

- 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
- 4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.1 end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2 eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3 eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations
- 5.4 recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5 ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life
- 5.6 ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources in accordance with national laws
- 5.b enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular ICT, to promote

women's empowerment

- 5.c adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

- 6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- 6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
- 6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
- 6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
- 6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
- 6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
- 6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
- 6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all

- 7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
- 7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix
- 7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency
- 7.a By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology
- 7.b By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying

modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support

Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

- 8.1** Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries
- 8.2** Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- 8.3** Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
- 8.4** Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead
- 8.5** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- 8.6** By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
- 8.7** Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
- 8.8** Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
- 8.9** By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
- 8.10** Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all
- 8.a** Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries
- 8.b** By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth

employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization

Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

- 9.1** Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
- 9.2** Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries
- 9.3** Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets
- 9.4** By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities
- 9.5** Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending
- 9.a** Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
- 9.b** Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities
- 9.c** Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020

Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries

- 10.1** By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average
- 10.2** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

- 10.3** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- 10.4** Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality
- 10.5** Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations
- 10.6** Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions
- 10.7** Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies
- 10.a** Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements
- 10.b** Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes
- 10.c** By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent

Goal 11 Make cities and human settlement inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

- 11.1** By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
- 11.2** By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
- 11.3** By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
- 11.4** Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
- 11.5** By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

- 11.6** By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
- 11.7** By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
- 11.a** Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
- 11.b** By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels
- 11.c** Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials

Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

- 12.1** Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries
- 12.2** By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- 12.3** By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses
- 12.4** By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment
- 12.5** By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse
- 12.6** Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle
- 12.7** Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities
- 12.8** By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony

with nature

- 12.a** Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production
- 12.b** Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
- 12.c** Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities

Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- 13.1** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- 13.2** Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
- 13.3** Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning
- 13.a** Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible
- 13.b** Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing states, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

- 14.1** By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
- 14.2** By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy

and productive oceans

- 14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels
- 14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics
- 14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information
- 14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation
- 14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism
- 14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries
- 14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets
- 14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of “The future we want”

Goal 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

- 15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

- 15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally
- 15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world
- 15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development
- 15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species
- 15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed
- 15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products
- 15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species
- 15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts
- 15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems
- 15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation
- 15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities

Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective institutions at all levels

- 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

- 16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime
- 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
- 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
- 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
- 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- 16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime
- 16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

Finance

- 17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
- 17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries
- 17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources
- 17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress
- 17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries

Technology

- 17.6** Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism
- 17.7** Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed
- 17.8** Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology

Capacity-building

- 17.9** Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation

Trade

- 17.10** Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda
- 17.11** Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020
- 17.12** Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access

Systemic issues

Policy and institutional coherence

- 17.3** Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence
- 17.14** Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
- 17.15** Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

- 17.16** Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries
- 17.17** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

Data, monitoring and accountability

- 17.18** By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
- 17.19** By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

Source: UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, 2015: 15-27